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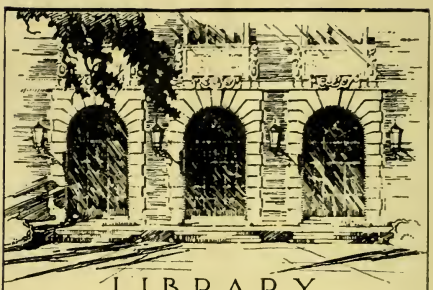

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A

SUMMER AT WEYMOUTH;

OR, THE

STAR OF FASHION.

VOL. III.

G. SIDNEY, Printer,
Northumberland-Street, Strand.

A

SUMMER AT WEYMOUTH;

OR, THE

STAR OF FASHION.

A NOVEL,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

BY THE AUTHOR OF A SUMMER AT BRIGHTON, &c. &c.

" Je ne me suis proposé que de representer la vie des hommes telle qu' elle est. A Dieu ne plaise que j'aie eu dessein de designer quel qu'un en particulier."

LE SAGE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. F. HUGHES, WIGMORE STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.

1808.

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THE

STAR OF FASHION;

OR,

A SUMMER AT WEYMOUTH.

CHAPTER I.

The blessings of a pure Air, kind Friends, and a contented mind.

BEFORE they had gone twenty miles from the metropolis, Mr. Elmsberry felt revived by the purity of the air; he ate his dinner with an appetite, and they remained at the inn until the next morning, lest he should be too much fatigued. They made Southampton in

 their

their way, and proposed staying there three complete days to rest the invalid, to whom the hotel appeared a palace of delight: he was surrounded by affectionate relatives, and amiable friends, who did every thing in their power to make his time pass on agreeably; but who among them was so tenderly soothing, so attentive to his looks, as Stella of Grassmere? She sung, to a Spanish guitar, which she had taken with her, little lively French and Italian airs; she read to him, and frequently indulged him in a game at chess or backgammon;—when, one evening pressing her hand to his lips, he exclaimed with rapture,

"Angel of health and felicity, how shall I repay this matchless tenderness? how

how deserve so rich a blessing as Stella of Grassmere?"

"By watchful tenderness when I am ill, my dear Elmsberry; when the time arrives that makes me your own Stella, to be taken care of by you in sickness, when that may rob me of all attraction; and although I do not imagine I shall ever fight a duel for *you*, as you have done for *me*, yet an overturn in a carriage, or a fall down stairs, may confine me in my bed for as long a time; and then *would* you not do as much for your Stella as she has done for you? At present you will say yes—and *mean* to be as excellent a nurse-keeper as I have been; but do not promise, for *lovers'* promises are very different from the behaviour of

husbands: no doubt the most careless ones *promised* to be exactly the reverse of what they are; and how many wives vow obedience and fidelity, who observe neither. Now have I been making a long speech, and have totally forgotten several capital moves which I intended to make: cunning creature, you thought I had the best of the game, and, to save yourself from check-mate, you bewildered my thoughts by flattery's deluding charm, and I have suffered your knight to win my queen: how provoking! I will play chess with my uncle, or Lord Charlewood;—they will not make me lose the game by sudden fits of rapture."

"You think Mr. Russell would, I suppose,

suppose, by your not naming him with the elders."

"He is too scientific a player for me to contend with; he plays better without seeing the board, than any of us can with our eyes and attention fixed upon it; even Arrandale, our instructor, cannot conquer him."

"He is a very amiable, intelligent man, and a great acquisition to our party."

"So thinks my uncle, who has invited him to take up his abode in Rockalba castle, to which he has consented; your father has also asked him to Grassmere Abbey; so we shall have the worthy

thy man with us, as long as we remain in the country, perhaps; and if Arrandale returns to India they mean to go together."

"I wish Arrandale may stay in England, and that he could become our brother by marrying Charlotte. How strange appears my father's conduct, in regard to that young man!"

Their conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Sir Edward, and the subject of their discourse; the former said,

"My dear boy, I have brought Arrandale to entertain you, while Stella takes a little air on the beach this warm evening,

evening; do not be angry with me for taking her from you."

"I am not so selfish indeed, Sir Edward; I shall only regret that I am not able to walk with her. I hope I shall have that blessing, when I reach the gardens of Rockalba. It would not promote my cure, to see the rose fading on her cheeks for want of the air and exercise to which she had been accustomed; too much has my Stella confined herself, lately, to make her William happy."

"Not *too* much if I *have* made him happy; but I do not doubt it; I *know* I have."

"Yet I would not have you vain of her

her attention, Elmsberry, for she has devoted as much of her time to me, her poor uncle, when I have been indisposed, as she has to a fine young fellow like you."

"And that, by convincing me of her perfection, increases my vanity."

"Since you are so incorrigible, I will say no more. You have quite spoiled this young man, Stella. I used to admire his humility, it is time to separate you; come my child."

"They found the rest of the party dispersed upon the beach; some were seated under the trees, others walking on the bank; the evening was perfectly calm,

calm, music floated on the soft breeze, from a barge stationed at an agreeable distance; and while the last beams of the setting sun still cast a faint blush on one part of the watery expanse, in another, the sparkling lustre of the rising moon seemed to dance lightly on the waves.

Sir Edward observed, that Mr. O'Roon was standing, with his arms folded, just on the edge of the beach, apart from the company; his eyes were fixed with mournful expression on the waves, and just as the admiral came close to him, a profound sigh heaved his bosom.

"My dear young friend, you are not

happy among us, we have your person here, but your heart is in Ireland."

"I cannot deny it; and my thoughts were wandering on the banks of the Banna."

"You once flattered me with the hopes of being made acquainted with an attachment which you have formed, it appears, without your father's approbation; and did I not promise, if possible, to be a mediator between you and the earl of Loughwead?"

"You was so kind, and if it had not been for the trouble which the duel, and Mr. Elmsberry's danger, in consequence, occasioned, I should, ere this, have

have placed an implicit confidence in you, who I am sure possess a mind above being biassed by pecuniary advantages, or family pride, to sacrifice the happiness of your children, or of any young person under your care to either of them. Soon as it may be convenient, after our arrival at Rockalba Castle, I will relate my little history, and if you can obtain my father's forgiveness, I shall be completely happy. But Oh! I dread that his pride will reign despotic over paternal affection."

"I think not, I *hope* not for your sake; for it is no flattery to say, that I have a sincere regard for you, O'Roon; and I assure you, it shall not be my fault, if you are not as happy as you can wish."

O'Roon

O'Roon had only time to bow his thanks, as they were joined by Mrs. Moreland, and the countess of Grassmere.

During their stay at Southampton, the admiral accompanied by Mr. O'Roon, and attended by Triton Oakheart, visited Portsmouth and Spithead, and went on board several of the men of war, which, with the docks and naval stores, gave great pleasure and satisfaction to O'Roon, who was a true friend to the union, and sincerely wished, that our maritime power might always preserve the sister islands from foreign invaders; and that an honourable and permanent peace might be signed, in a short time, between the imperial

imperial sovereign of our three kingdoms, and the Belligerent powers; that commerce might in safety waft her treasures to every quarter of the world, and agriculture smile, where war has spread destruction on the lands of other countries, and rendered them as plenteous as those in our own. The admiral smiled at the enthusiasm of his young friend, and said:

"You are for hastening the Millenium, when spears are to be turned into ploughshares, and our swords into pruning hooks; when our cannon are to be converted to a durable fence for our own fields and parks, to secure them from the cattle; when our gun-powder is used only to blow up the rocks, and our balls

balls spread into thin sheets, defend the roofs of our houses. Then must our ships of war be converted into merchantmen, great part of our seamen, must turn fishers; our soldiers, shepherds and husbandmen; and all depredators must become *honest men*. Ambition, and his offspring tyranny, must be totally annihilated, and perfect content reign in every bosom; for these latter changes must take place, before the former can, throughout the world."

"I wish for what certainly cannot be, while the ambitious are continually invading the rights of their neighbours. Ambition made war in heaven, and if angels were not exempt from that destructive passion, no wonder men should be

be seduced by that crime primeval to the world."

"And being driven out of heaven, it has been, ever since the world was created, its chief scourge; a destructive demon, who fans the flames of civil discord, and of foreign wars; and can only be repulsed by the most undaunted courage,—true British courage, which, with skill and fortitude, knows how to check the mischief-plotting foes of Britain, traitors at home, or enemies abroad; and firmly guard our glorious constitution, unshaken, on its solid basis."

"Spoken like a British Admiral! were you now in actual service, Sir Edward,

ward, I should be tempted, I believe, to go a volunteer on board your ship, and fight by your side in defence of the united kingdoms."

"Thank heaven! we have a sufficiency of brave commanders, who have *right* hands to defend their country, and my *left* is not wanted. Yet in an emergency I might, perhaps, use it with effect; I have also a privateer, built after my own direction, ready to guard the coast; on board that I would command a chosen crew of well-tried brave ones, invalids unfit for regular service yet; but you will see them at Rockalba, therefore I will say no more about them now, they can speak better for themselves."

When

When Sir Edward had visited, with Mr. O'Roon, every thing at Portsmouth and Spithead, worthy the observation of a stranger in England, they returned to Southampton; and as Elmsberry continued to mend rapidly, they designed to proceed on their journey to Rockalba the next day.

CHAPTER II.

The distressed Orphans.

In the evening the ladies, with the Admiral, Lord Charlewood, O'Roon, and Doctor R. leaving the invalid to the care of Mr. Russell, and Arrandale, went to walk on the beach.

They had not been long there, before they observed a young woman in deep mourning

mourning, visibly drooping beneath disease and affliction; she leaned upon the shoulder of a boy, apparently about thirteen, who was also in mourning; he looked up at her, with eyes swimming in tears, while she bent on him a look of tenderness and despair.

When they had passed, Sir Edward perceived Stella looking after them, with a melancholy and anxious expression in her countenance, which convinced a wish to know, and, if possible, to relieve their trouble: she said, her eyes still following the youthful mourners,

"Poor things! Oh! Uncle she looks like a lily drooping after a storm; how the tears stood on her pallid cheeks

cheeks!—and the boys dark eyes expressed, through his tears, a dread of losing the fragile flower that leaned on him for support.—I never saw such an interesting pair! perhaps we might relieve their distress."

"We must not be obtrusive, my love, let us observe them at a distance. See, she has seated herself on the willow root, and the boy is gathering up some shells from the sand.—We will walk towards him."

"The Doctor and I," said Mrs. Moreland, "will walk near the young woman, for she really looks too ill to be left alone."

When Sir Edward and his niece came near the boy, they heard him sob, and saw the tears fall on the sand, as he stooped to pick up the shells. The Admiral, with the gentle voice of compassion, said:

"My dear boy, what occasions this deep distress? Tell me, that I may know how I can relieve you."

"I want no relief, Sir, for myself, I can live upon these little shell fish, and sleep upon the grass, but my sister! my dear Anne, where will she sleep to-night! Oh! she must lie on the damp ground, and starve to death!"

"Heaven forbid! starve!"

"Yes—Yes—she will—and I shall be left in the wide world by myself, for we have only but one another—poor orphans that we are—turned out of doors to perish *here*, in this Southampton. Oh! it is a cruel place!"

"Be pacified, my dear child, be pacified; I will take care of you, and this lady will be a kind friend to your sister; you shall both go home with us."

"Indeed! will you be so good to us? Oh! may heaven bless you!- May heaven for ever bless you both!"

Exclaimed the child, falling on his knees, and kissing their hands with frantic joy. Neither Stella nor Sir Edward

could restrain their tears, so much were they affected by the emotions of the beautiful boy. They each took a hand, and led him towards his sister, while, as he gazed on them alternately, his fine dark eyes expressed the grateful joy that glowed in his young heart. His sister sat resting her elbow on her knee, and covering her eyes with her hand. Stella had desired the boy not to speak too abruptly to his sister, lest it should flurry her, therefore, he went gently up to her, and said:

"How is my dear sister?"

"Better my Theodore.—Have you got some cockles for your supper?"

"No, my dear Anne, I have got what is better; kind friends who promise to take care of us both; here they are!"

"Friends!—Theodore! is it possible; friends to take care of us?"

"Yes," said Stella, taking her cold white hand, "friends who will do all in their power to make you and your brother happy."

"Do you know us, lady?"

"Yes—you are orphans, and in distress; my good uncle and I want no farther knowledge to make us your friends."

" My father's name was Stuart ; he was first lieutenant in the —— regiment, and died only two months ago, at Jersey, from which island we are come."

" No more, my dear young lady, of your history to-night ; to-morrow, we shall be happy to hear as much as you will think proper to favour us with. I see that your spirits have been fatigued ; this gentleman is my friend, and an honour to the faculty : I shall put you under his guidance, a chamber shall be prepared for you, and he shall order every restorative necessary for you ; and to-morrow we will introduce you to agreeable society, who will enliven your spirits. As to my young friend here, if you will spare him to us this evening, we shall be

glad of his company, and I assure you that he shall be taken care of."

"I doubt it not, and *he* will have spirits sufficient to relate our misfortunes; the innocent can have no reserve. Oh! may he find a friend, poor unprotected boy!—pardon me, beneficent beings! but my feeble lips cannot express the gratitude I fell, for this timely and unexpected deliverance."

"Silence, my interesting patient, I must not have you exhaust yourself by talking now; to-morrow you will have more strength to express your gratitude; for the present, Sir Edward Fitzalbion, and the Countess of Grassmere, will read it in your expressive eyes."

Bending

Bending to her benefactors with becoming humility, blended with the graceful ease of conscious worth, Miss Stuart took the offered arm of Doctor R. and Mrs. Moreland taking the hand of the animated Theodore, they proceeded immediately to the house, rightly judging that some light food was absolutely the first thing needful for both brother and sister; and left the rest of the party to prolong their walk, and comment on the happy chance that led them and the poor orphans to the beach; an event which afforded as much satisfaction to the generous protectors, as it did to the grateful hearts of the protected.

On their return home, they met doc-

tor R. and Theodore, coming to meet them; the latter, although greatly cheered by some broiled chicken, and wine diluted, lest it should have too potent an effect on his stomach, weakened by a want of proper nourishment, could not restrain the tears of gratitude, when, humbly bending, he kissed the hands of the countess and Sir Edward, and again blessed them for preserving his sister.

The Admiral introduced his new friend to all his old ones, from whom he had an affectionate reception, for his fine open countenance prepossessed, at first sight, every one in his favour. Then, Sir Edward anxious to know what had reduced young people, so perfectly genteel in their appearance and manners, to the

the dreadful situation of houseless wanderers in want of bread, asked Theodore if he had any objection to relate the cause of his own and sister's misfortunes before so many? He replied with warmth,

" No, I would relate them to the whole world, for the glory of my sister, who preferred virtue and poverty, to splendid infamy! Can I, Sir, make that too public?—Alas!—it is *all* that I can do for her! I am not old enough to avenge her wrongs with my sword *now*, when I am I *will*."

" Glorious boy! and did you persuade your sister to be poor and virtuous?"

" Anne Stuart, Sir, wanted no persuasion

sion to act honourably, for we were born of good and honourable parents, who early taught us how to tread in the paths of virtue and honour, and to shun those of vice and lawless pleasure.—My father repeated those lessons on his death-bed; he said, 'My children, all I have to leave you is an unblemished name, and virtuous precepts;—I wished, my beloved Anne, to live until your brother was of an age to be your protector.—I wished to see you, Theodore, fixed in the army, and promising to be an honour to the profession—but it cannot be—Heaven calls me from you, and to the care of protecting Heaven I leave you.—Remember the lessons and example of your excellent mother, and remember *me*.'—Dear and valuable parents can we ever forget you,

Oh,

Oh, no! they live in our hearts.—Our amiable mother has been dead only fifteen months; my brave father only two.—But I intrude on your indulgence—forgive me.—Soon after I was born, in Scotland, the regiment to which my father belonged, was ordered to Ireland; we went with him to that kingdom, and lived there very happily until I was nine years old—we then went with the regiment to Jersey, where my dear mother grew ill, but she did not neglect my sister and I; we never went to any school, our parents instructed us, and made learning a pleasure.

"The General was very partial to my father, and frequently called at our house; he was kind and consoling, at the death

death of my mother, and we loved him. He was the same when my father died; but as soon as the funeral was over, he took advantage of my youth, and my sister's unguarded situation, and made dishonourable proposals to her.—He offered her what *he* called, a *noble* establishment, and to appoint me immediately a cadet, and to raise me rapidly to the rank my father held—but the General was a married man, his lady lived at Jersey—we treated his offers as they deserved, rejected them with contempt, and he went to pay a visit in Guernsey; when my sister, dreading his return, determined to go to England, and look out for the situation of governess, and to place me in a military academy. A worthy clergyman gave my sister letters of

recom-

recommendation to some respectable families, and she obtained a draft on an agent in London, for some arrears of pay, due to my father, which, with the produce of our furniture, and every thing she considered as useless to us now, my poor Anne imagined would be sufficient to maintain us, until she got a situation. A soldier, who had always been an attached and useful servant to my father, assisted us in packing, agreed for our passage to Southampton, and took charge of our trunk, which was conveyed by my sister's order, to the vessel at night, and we followed soon after, as she wished to conceal our destination from the general, lest he should have the audacity to follow her.

" We arrived safe, and not choosing to be at any house of public resort, my sister immediately took a private lodging at a grocer's, and then hired a man to bring the trunk from the ship. But what was her distress when the master of the vessel assured her that no such trunk as she described had ever been put on board, which, as he was a man of good character, well known both at Jersey and Southampton, she could not disbelieve.

" He said that he imagined the soldier who took our places in his cabin, and who saw us on board, might have left it in a public house, where he saw him drinking with several others of the regiment; and that as he should return

imme-

immediately, he would make enquiries about it, and if he recovered it, convey it to her the next voyage he made to Southampton, which would be in about a fortnight.

" The little money which my sister had in her pocket, supplied us with food, but was not sufficient to pay our lodging; and we, luckily, had brought a change of linen in a parcel with us. The people, in whose house we lived, were worldly-minded, mercenary, and very inquisitive; and our saving, recluse mode of living, seemed to displease them greatly; although my sister told them of the mischance of leaving the trunk. But when the vessel again arrived without it, when the master said, that he could gain no intelligence of it, and that the man was

gone

gone to Guernsey, to his general, they became quite insolent to my sister, and made her give them her watch, her mourning rings, with my parent's hair in them, and even our little bundle of linen, which altogether, they said, would not pay their rent, and for a looking-glass, which from not being supported at the bottom, had dragged the nail out of the rotten wall; and surely that was no fault of ours.—They then desired us to quit their apartments, and swindle others, with a fine tale about a trunk, out of a month's lodging. That was this morning, when we were so inhumanly plundered, and turned out of doors. You found us, my noble benefactors, you found us starving, and without a home to shelter us."

"Thank

"Thank heaven we did *find* you! where would you have gone? what would you have done?"

"I intended, when it grew a little darker, to solicit protection for my sister, of some Lady, to whom I would have told the cause of our distress—but my dear Anne said:—'I am very ill, Theodore—I shall only want a grave.'—Then I ran from her to weep by myself; I thought my heart would break—and then you spoke to me."

"Give me your hand, Theodore, you are my namesake;" said Mr. Russell, crossing the room, and holding out his hand; "I have no children, and am rich; heaven has sent you and your sister to

bless

bless my old age. Arrandale, you have a good fortune, and want no protector; I will adopt these distressed orphans."

"But if you should find the heirs you are seeking for, Mr. Russell."

"I have enough for *all*."

"How did you know my name was Russell, Sir, I did not mention it?"

"Is it? I meant Theodore, my christian name; you said your father's name was Stuart."

"I did Sir, but I was christened Theodore Russell, after a brother of my mother's, whom she loved dearly, although

although she was very young when he went abroad."

"Where did he go, child?"

"To an uncle in the East Indies."

"What was your mother's name?"

"Anne Amelia Russell, before she married. She was brought up by an aunt, Mrs. Amelia M'Gilpin; who, when a widow, having but a small fortune, went to live in Scotland, and took my mother with her."

"Huzza! I have found them! I have found my heirs! congratulate me! Dear boy, I am your uncle!"

"My

"My uncle! this is unexpected joy, indeed! Oh! my sister, my dear sister! you will have a protector—where is she? is she asleep?"

"I hope so," said the doctor; "but at any rate she must not be told to-night, nor abruptly to-morrow morning. You love your sister, and must be very cautious—may I trust you?"

"On my honour, Sir, I will not tell her until you give me leave."

"I long to see my niece, whom I love unseen—dear, virtuous girl, and noble boy, how proud I shall be of you both, and happy if you will love me."

"Our

" Our dear mother loved you—she thought me like you; and you, Sir, resemble her, I think; and your voice sounds like her's.—Oh! we shall love you dearly!"

The affectionate youth fondly embraced his newly-found uncle, who returned his caresses with paternal tenderness. Miss Stuart's presence was alone wanting to complete the felicity of the whole party, the amiable Elmsberry felt an interest in Theodore's story, and its happy termination, which made him forget he was an invalid, and kept him up beyond his usual early hour of retiring, without feeling the least fatigue.

CHAPTER III.

The guilty exterminated.

EARLY the next morning, Mr. Russell took his nephew with him in his carriage, to the people who had detained Miss Stuart's watch and rings. Mr. and Mrs. Grubb came creeping, like mean sycophants, to the owner of a carriage, and humbly asked what he would please to have in their way.

"Your

"Your bill for lodging this young gentleman and his sister, my nephew and niece, and all the articles which you detained."

"Indeed, your honour; we did not know—we did not mean—"

"Your account, and the things this instant."

The couple, ashamed of their behaviour to young persons of such consequence, slunk back into their shop of all sorts, upbraiding each other for want of patience. When they brought the things, and the bill, which Mr. Russell paid, he said, sternly,

"If

" If you, who are old and experienced, had behaved to young creatures, who were strangers here, and suffering under a temporary distress from the loss of their trunk, with hospitality, handsomely, *very handsomely* would I have rewarded your kindness to my heirs; and they would always have remembered those who had been their friends in distress, with gratitude—as it is, you will be forgotten, or thought of with the contempt you deserve."

The carriage whirled from the door, leaving the mercenary pair execrating their conduct, which had lost them a handsome present, and rich friends; and they again entered their shop, loudly accusing each other of being the inhuman aggressor. By

By the time the uncle and nephew got home, Miss Stuart was up; and with the rest of the party in the breakfast room. Theodore flew to her, and put the redeemed articles in her lap. Mr. Russell was then introduced to her by Sir Edward, as a friend of his, lately arrived from Bengal: the delighted uncle kissed her affectionately; she received the paternal salute with modest politeness; but it reminded her of her lost father; a soft sigh heaved her bosom, and painful recollection caused the tears to flow down her blushing cheeks. Mr. Russell gazed with fondness on his sister's daughter, who was surprised, and rather offended at the intenseness of his gaze. She turned to her brother, and said:

"Theodore,

" Theodore, have you made any enquiries of this gentleman, concerning our uncle?"

" I have, and he knows him well. Our uncle is in England, my dear sister, and has advertised for my mother, or her children—but we saw no newspapers."

" Where can I find my uncle, Sir? Is he in London."

" No, my dear lady, he is in the same county with you—under the same roof—Shall I introduce you to him?—I love him as *myself*, we are *inseparable*. Theodore, present your uncle to Miss Stuart, whom he is eager to acknowledge for his niece." " Dear

" Dear sister, this gentleman is our uncle; the Theodore Russell after whom I was named.—He will be a parent to us both."

" Merciful heaven can this be possible! My uncle here after so long an absence, and whose silence made my dear mother lament him as dead! Oh! that she had been so happy as to have seen you before she died!"

" My dear child let us have no regrets; my sister is happier than we are;—I wrote many letters, but never received an answer, which must have been caused by my aunt's settling in Scotland; and without knowing the proper method of conveying letters to Cassumbaza, they scarcely ever come

come safe to hand: that method I carefully pointed out in a letter to my dear sister, addressed to the house in which I left her with my aunt M'Gilpin."

"That house, with several others adjoining, was burnt down soon after my aunt went to Scotland; and the neighbours, with whom she left her address, lost it, no doubt, in the confusion; and they were so dispersed, that no inquiries could be made: this my mother imagined was the unfortunate cause of her not receiving your letter, containing your proper address; yet I have heard her say, that she hazarded several letters, by various methods, but without success. What a blessing for us in our

forlorn

forlorn state to meet a near and an affectionate relation!"

"Thus it is, my dear Anné, that blessings frequently spring out of apparent evils: the loss of your trunk detained you in Southampton; and the inhumanity of the people where you lived, proved the direct means of throwing you into the protecting arms of an uncle, who can certainly make you rich, and he flatters himself happy. *Happy* as you will make me, my interesting children! For now I feel *rich* indeed, my blooming treasures! You, Lord Charlewood, are a father; and you, Sir Edward, are an uncle; therefore you will not wonder at my raptures. I hope Lady Charlewood, and Mrs. Moreland, that

you will honour my girl with your countenance and advice. And will the Countess of Grassmere, and Lady Charlotte, regard Anne Stuart as their friend?"

"My dear Mr. Russell," said Stella, "Miss Stuart made such an interest for herself in our hearts, before we knew she was your niece, that Lady Charlewood, and Mrs. Moreland, were amicably contending for the fair orphan, each wishing to protect her; and Lady Charlotte and I, both resolved to dissipate her sorrow by sisterly affection; and certainly her affinity to you will not render it less interesting to us. She will have two kind mothers in the Countess and Mrs. Moreland; and tender sisters in Lady Charlotte and myself; we have,

have, also, the Lady Jane and Ellen, at Rockalba, who I am sure will love her, and rejoice like us in the acquisition to our family party."

"And will these ladies deign to be mothers to me; and will you and Lady Charlotte be sisters?"

"Yes, my sweet boy, we will be mothers to you," said Lady Charlewood; "and you shall be loved as a brother by my children, among whom I reckon the Countess of Grassmere; those claims were due to such orphans as your sister and yourself, if you had not been so fortunate as to find an uncle in Mr. Russell."

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Miss Stuart and her brother acknowledged, in the most engaging manner, their heart-felt gratitude for the kindness of the ladies. Mr. Russell then said, that he must solicit them, as mothers to his girl and boy, to advise them both in the purchase of every elegance, in point of appearance, which their deep mourning would admit; for he should not like to carry them destitute of apparel to Weymouth; and gave two notes, of a hundred pound each, to Lady Charlewood and Mrs. Moreland. The former undertook, having had boys of her own, to clothe Theodore; and the latter willingly promised to assist Miss Stuart, in the purchase of all that was needful for a lady's appearance at a fashionable watering place, with which the

various

various warehouses and milliners in Southampton would presently supply them.

This business detained them a day longer than they proposed staying, but the delay caused no regret, so truly did they rejoice in the felicity of Mr. Russell, and the amiable orphans.

Miss Stuart had written to Mr. La Roche, the clergyman who had given her the letters of recommendation, to inform him of her loss, and very inconvenient detention, in consequence, at Southampton; and intreated him to address a letter of consolation and advice to the post-house; at which place she had daily called without success. She

called

called, however, as she passed that morning, and found the following:

"My dear young Friend,

"You may *now* return to us from Southampton with safety; your persecutor is no more! Instead of being at Guernsey, as was said, he was lurking in disguise, near the house of a gentleman at Jersey, who has a pretty wife, with whom General Lawless carried on an intrigue, at the same time that he was taking, as he thought, sure means to secure you to himself; but a stop was put to his licentious proceedings, by the avenging hand of an injured husband, by whom he was found out and pursued to the thicket, between your garden and mine, where

where they fought, and Lawless was mortally wounded.—He was taken to your late dwelling, being the nearest, and I was sent for to pray by him: he knew perfectly where he was, and that his end was fast approaching—and the horrors of his mind affected all around him.

" I sent immediately for his wife;—but previous to her coming, he confessed to me, that he had offered a large bribe to Dick Massy for your trunk, knowing that the loss of it would detain you at Southamptom, to which place he intended to follow you, flattering himself that, in such a scene of distress, you would accept of his liberal offers; and he had actually sent Dick

to

to prepare a cottage, which he had by the cliffs, for your reception; so sanguine he was, that your affluence would prefer him and the to extreme poverty. He sent treacherous fellow with wine, and various necessaries, in a boat to the Cottage of the Cliffs; but from some great inattention, the boatmen suffered themselves to be run down by a swift-sailing sloop, who could not prevent the accident, nor stop to preserve the lives of the men: their bodies were thrown on shore, and Dick Massy, being known by his regimentals, was conveyed to the barracks, and, although unworthy, was buried with military honours. This news had been brought to the General by another of his emissaries, who also gave him warning

ing

ing of the husband being on the watch; but nothing could deter him from keeping his appointment with the adultress; he met her at the appointed place, and his death ensued. After his first rather penitential confession, he wished bitterly that he had humbled the haughtiness of Anne Stuart, and sent the proud boy to Africa. He then raved incoherently; sometimes fancied he had secured you at the Cottage of the Cliffs;—and sometimes fancying the spectre of his drowned emissary was upbraiding him for his untimely death.

"His wife sent me word that she could not encounter dismal sights, her nerves were so weak; but conjured me to see that every thing was done for the

poor General that his melancholy state required. Thus acted the fashionable, gay wife, to her libertine husband, who died in agonies too dreadful to repeat.

" Vengeance has speedily overtaken the guilty; they are exterminated from the land of the living—gone to appear before their awful judge; no time for penitence to cleanse their soul, defiled with premeditated and actual crimes; how dreadful is the idea!

" Most fervently have I returned thanks to protecting heaven, that their crimes against you, dear, virtuous maid, were only *premeditated.* Return now, beloved orphans, you may repose safely beneath my humble roof; I have recovered

vered your trunk—it was found at Dick's lodgings. My wife joins in the wish, that you and the dear Theodore, will come and add to the olive branches around our table. My friend, Mr. B. of Southampton, will supply you with money to bring you back once more to the parsonage-house, from which you should never have departed, if it had not been for the vile designs of a powerful and abandoned libertine.

"We are all rejoicing in the pleasing expectation of seeing you and Theodore very soon. A fervent blessing attends you both, from your true friend and pastor,

"URBAN LA ROCHE."

"Dear

" Dear worthy pastor, how I revere you !"

Exclaimed Miss Stuart, when she had finished the letter, which she did not read until she came home, as when she received it she was in an open carriage with the ladies. After dinner she said, as the letter contained some extraordinary events which form a kind of sequel to her history, if it were agreeable to the company, her brother should read it. Theodore made no comments—but his expressive manner of reading discovered his feelings, at events so sudden and awful as the death of the treacherous Dick Massy, and the abandoned General Lawless; tears of affection rushed into his eyes, when he read the

kind

kind invitation to reside at the parsonage; and when he concluded the letter, he said, with spirit,—

"Well, I am not sorry that the injured husband has taken the vengeance out of the hands of an injured brother; for I resolved never to enter into *his* regiment, because I would have demanded satisfaction of the villain, when a match for him in height and skill."

"Yes, my dear boy, I feared he would go on unpunished for his villainy, because you were too young, and I too old, to be your sister's champion.—Justly, most *justly*, has his infamous career been checked, and his treacherous assistant too. Heaven grant that worthier

thier guardians of Great Britain, and her subjects, may supply their stations in the regiment."

Every individual of the party most sincerely joined in that wish. Mr. Russell said they must write immediately to prevent the good pastor and his family from expecting them; and that he, himself, would thank him for his paternal attention to them. He then asked his niece if she wished to have the trunk sent? She replied that his liberality had rendered the most of the contents useless, now, to herself and brother; therefore, she should request Mr. La Roche to send her only the drawings, family miniatures, a few books, and several trifling articles on which she set a value, all of which

which might be packed in a much smaller trunk, if he forced open the large one, and would accept the rest of the contents for his children, whom they would fit, as one of his sons was just the size of Theodore, and his eldest daughter of her's.

Mr. Russell desired her to confine her letter to that business and affectionate expressions, and undertook, himself, the account of their distress and unexpected meeting with him. He also desired her to purchase a trunk, such as would hold the things she wished for, and fill it with what articles she imagined would be most acceptable to the children, and a handsome purse, or pocket book, for each of them; that

two

two of the books, containing a ten-pound note each, should be a present from her to the two girls—and Theodore should send a similar gift to the two boys. This, he said, with the promise of a regular correspondence, would evince the becoming gratitude and affection which was due to the worthy La Roche, from the orphans whom he would have taken under his hospitable roof, when they were in distress.

Their letters, replete with all that could charm the hearts of the friendly pastor and his family, in regard to their young friends, were sent off with the trunk, by a packet just ready to sail for the Island of Jersey.

The

The next morning the happy group proceeded on their journey to Rockalba Castle. Mr. Elmsberry, who had rapidly approached a state of convalescence, during his stay at Southampton, set off in excellent spirits, looking forward to the blissful period when he should enjoy perfect health and felicity.

CHAPTER IV.

Arrival at Weymouth; and rejoicing at Rockalba Castle.

As the avant-courier had given notice of the time that the Admiral and his party would arrive at Weymouth, the bells rung, and the joyous tenants around Rockalba came out with marrow-bones and cleavers, flowers and green bowers, to hail the return of Sir Edward and the ladies, who

who were not only their liberal benefactors, but their soothing friends in illness and affliction. Mr. O'Roon said,—

" At Grassmere Abbey, and its fertile environs, I have learned excellent lessons, and here I find they will be repeated. How it adds to the beauty of cultivated lands to see them adorned with the dwellings of plenty and content; where happy parents, with a healthy offspring, enjoy the comforts of their little well-stocked farm and garden; then, when a spot of the land, his labour tills, blooms around his humble cot, affording a maintenance for himself and family, the cultivator goes forth to toil for us with grateful heart: he sees, with joy, the hills he has manured, white with the

flocks

flocks of his beautiful employer, and smiles to see the vallies rich with the golden grain his sun-burnt hand has sowed.—He sees, from afar, his comfortable home; the smoke arises from the lowly roof, his wife is preparing the invigorating meal;—he shall enjoy it with her, and her little ones; the thought cheers his heart, it strengthens his nerves, and makes his laborious work seem light."

"I am rejoiced," said Sir Edward, "to find that you, who are the owner of a landed estate, consider the gratitude you owe to those whose labour gives it value; for may the lands of men, who disdain to promote the happiness of their industrious fellow creatures, be as barren

ren of vegetable treasures, as their hearts are of humanity! For believe me, O'Roon, that an almost imperceptible retrenchment of luxuries would enable the rich to bestow the necessaries of life on the labouring poor. Oh! would they, instead of regarding humble cottages as frightful encumbrances on their estates, which must be erased from the ground, view them as beauties, which, by improvement, will become adornments and blessings! Such I consider the neat cottages scattered on *my grounds*; I see the youthful inhabitants growing up like young trees, who will flourish in strength and beauty, when the old ones decay and fall to the earth. I see the curling smoke rising from the fire that dresses their frugal, but wholesome

some meal, as incense acceptable to the divine, impartial father of mankind, who, as I act by my brethren here, will act by me hereafter."

"Sir Edward, I have been thoughtless, not inhuman, I hope; for the future, I will as diligently watch over the domestic happiness of those who cultivate my land, and attend my flocks and herds, as I wish they may be diligent and just to me. Hitherto, I have paid through the hands of my faithful steward, their scanty wages, without thinking how insufficient it was to render their dwellings comfortable, and procure them the common necessaries of life. *I* will, and *others*, too, shall profit by the excellent lessons I shall learn of you; and the peasantry

peasantry on the banks of the Banna, shall be as happy as those at Grassmere and Rockalba."

"If you will reside at the castle, we will walk, or ride over the grounds; you shall examine the culture, and visit the cottages of the cultivators. You will find my steward a very sensible, intelligent man, who can give you more information in regard to the actual management than I can, for I express my wishes and he fulfils them."

"I will most gratefully accept your invitation, for I know that I shall feel more at home, and receive far more improvement here, than in the house my father has hired."

When

When they entered the castle, they were welcomed by the Earl and Countess of Loughmead; the ladies Jane and Ellen, and the Lords, Heathland and Splendormore, who were all sincerely rejoiced to see Mr. Elmsberry so much recovered as to walk from the carriage to the hall, with the assistance of Mr. O'Roon's arm, on one side, and Lord Heathland's on the other.

The Countess of Grassmere, after saluting the friends who met them in her usual affectionate manner, said, looking around her with pleasure,

"Dear, *dear* Rockalba! revered old castle! how glad I am to behold thy ivy-mantled towers! Here I shall be happy;

happy; and here, I hope, you, dear suffering Elmsberry, will recover your health and spirits."

"I feel already the bracing influence of the sea breezes as I inhale them."

"Yes, yes," said Doctor R. "they will soon prove abler physicians than myself; and when they have set you firmly upon your legs, I shall take my leave."

"Indeed, my good Doctor, we shall not part with you so easily; you have closely confined yourself for the benefit of this wounded young man; you have watched over him day and night with tender care, during his illness, and sympathised in our affliction with the

sincerest friendship; and now I shall insist on your staying at Rockalba when he is in perfect health, and partaking our happiness."

"Well, Sir Edward, I do not feel inclined to be very refractory;—my nephew can manage without me in the summer very well; therefore, while I am enjoying myself in this delightful place, I can have no apprehension of my patients being neglected; probably I may meet some of them here, at Weymouth."

"It begins to fill very fast," said Lord Heathland; "we have the Duchess of Myrtlebank here, with the duke, an invalid, and Miss Golightly, more affected

fected than ever. The Duchess of Zephyrly, Lady Frivola, the Marquis of Rosebower, accompanied by Paradel Gossamer, have joined the Duke, and his uncle, Lord Alexander Airy."

"How is Everbloom?"

"On the mend; so you will not have his death on your conscience. Lord Alexander has sent his yacht, which has every accommodation for an invalid, to fetch him; his mother is to come with him, and Sir John Huzard, who is this day, or night, most likely, made the happy husband of Lady Eva, means to drive her down in his Westminster Gig, after sporting it for a day or two in London."

"And I, now I have congratulated the owner of this castle, and his party on their arrival," said Splendormore, "shall set off instantly for the metropolis, fast as post-horses can fly away with me, to sport *my* Westminster gig, at the same time, and then dash down here with the bride and bridegroom, my bays against his grays."

"But you will not be a match for John, unless you have a bride in the gig."

"Faith, there you are right, Heathland! I must coax some fine woman or other to dash down with me."

"And

"And break her neck with you, my Lord?"

"No, no, Lady Jane, I am not so careless as you imagine; were I so happy as I *wish* to be, you should know my skill as a driver by experience."

"Well, if you come back to Weymouth with whole bones, perhaps I may venture to take a drive with you some morning, with the permission of papa and mamma. Suppose you ask the Countess of Everbloom to come with you, I will engage that she will leave her son to the care of his attendants, now he is out of danger, and mount the gig with all the spirit of eighteen; and in truth, at a little distance, she looks as young

young as Lady Eva, and dresses as youthfully;—so tonish as you are, she will not disgrace your new carriage."

"Faith, as I cannot *choose* my partner; I think sporting the dowager will be no bad joke for the scandalous chronicles of the times, perhaps the papers may marry us."

"Never mind, they do not bind so fast as the archbishop of Canterbury; however, it will not be amiss to take care of your heart, for she has been expert at stealing those trifles from the men, it seems, ever since she was fifteen; and cannot leave off the practice even now. She steals them even out of royal bosoms, and, as children do by

their toys, plays with them for a while, *spoils* them, and then throws them away with disdain; and if men's hearts were made with rubies, she could sell them, and set up a faro bank with the money."

"I assure you, Lady Jane, that my heart will be perfectly safe, for I shall leave it with *you*."

"Then, poor *heartless* creature, where will you find courage to drive *your* Westminster gig, against Sir John's?

"I will think of Lady Jane Elmsberry; her ideal image will inspire me with ardour, sufficient to undertake the most hazardous enterprise."

"Nobility and gentry, here assembled, behold a wonder! a modern young man of fashion, expressing himself as heroically as an ancient knight errant!! Well, Don Quixotte the second, I will take what care I can of your quizical heart; I will put it into my repository, carry it about with me, and shew it for a curiosity: but mind, if it breaks, or flies away, you must not blame me, for indeed I can scarcely take care of my own little merry heart. Now do tell me, dear Stella, where you have left good mamma Moreland, Charlotte and Arrandale?"

"They chose to walk through the plantations with Mr. Russell and his heirs."

The

The Countess then informed those who were strangers to the event, of the manner in which they had found the orphans, and excited such an interest for them in the breasts of her auditors, that when they arrived, they met the most cordial reception from the Loughmead family, Lady Jane, and Lord Heathland.

As the travellers had taken an early dinner on the road, in compliment to Elmsberry, tea and coffee was therefore brought in, and Splendormore set off immediately after for the metropolis.

CHAPTER V.

A modern wife, and a serious proposal declined.

After paying and receiving visits of ceremony on their arrival in Dorsetshire, a very elegant breakfast was given at Rockalba castle, which was attended by all the personages of quality and fashion at Weymouth, and, indeed, for many miles round. The Duchesses of Myrtlebank and Zephyrly, Lady Frivola, Miss Golightly; the Duke of Zephyrly,

phyrly, Lord Alexander, the Marquis, and Mr. Gossamer. His grace of Myrtlebank, thought himself too much indisposed to venture out of his house, although his lovely Flavia said to Lady Jane, "La, my dear, nothing ails him, but he is so full of ridiculous fancies! the man is grown an absolute hypochondriac, ever since we passed a week at Santmore priory. Oh! such a delightful week, my dear! there were so many princes! our own and the foreigners, and we had balls; my sister and I danced for ever, and with royal partners *only:* then we danced alfresco, and rested ourselves in such sweet, close-covered bowers! Oh! I fancied myself in Elysian groves! Then came a charming masquerade, and I was Ganimede, in a flesh-

colour

colour light dress, a loose drapery of blue gauze fringed with silver, my hair a la Greque, bound with a double wreath of roses; silver sandals, and an antique cup in my hand, fit for Jove to sip his nectar from. You cannot imagine, Lady Jane, how much I was followed and admired."

"Yes I can, because you must have exhibited your fine figure to the greatest advantage."

"To be sure; yet, do you know, my quizical old Duke quarrelled with me about it, and called it *shockingly* indecent; an unmannerly bear of a *husband*; every other man swore that it was beautiful! Captivating beyond any thing they

they ever beheld! but *husbands* are so disgustingly rude one hates them, after the honey moon, for then the odious creatures begin to grow cross and contradictory; but let me fly from the stupid subject, to the enchanting theatricals. The tragedian K. was the acting manager there, and I assure you, my dear, that I was obliged to coax him, in my most fascinating manner, to let me act Sir Harry Wildair, dressed in the extreme of the present mode, and I did succeed with *Sir Gravity Buskin,* who played Colonel Standard divinely to the Marchioness of Ceresfield herself, in the gay lady Lurewell; my Duke was sulky as he was at the dear masquerade; because I wore masculine attire."

"I do not wonder," said the Countess of Grassmere, "that his Grace disapproved of your appearing so attired, and in ——"

"Such a *terrible* rakish character.—True, my dear Countess; but then novelty is so delightful; I saw myself quite a new being; I heard the women wish that I was, in reality, a man; and the men thank their stars that I was an adorable woman: in short, I was applauded, admired, and caressed, by both sexes; and it was very ill-natured of the Duke not to admire me too; he *would* if I had not been his *wife*."

"The more the Duke admires you, the more vexed he must be at your being

ing solicitous to obtain the admiration of other men, of artful libertines, whose flattery may be injurious to your honour and his own."

" Really, Countess, you talk like a precise young maiden, educated in the country by an old uncle, and a discreet matron, after the morality of the old times; but when you enter the gay world as a wife, you will, very probably, act as other wives do—and hate your husband when he contradicts you, and grows jealous, because other men think you a lovely creature; yet so it is with my *old* tormentor.'

" The Duke of Myrtlebank is but a few weeks older than when your Grace chose

chose him for your husband; if you disliked an old man, why did you marry him?"

"Oh, the simplicity of that question! Pardon me, Countess, but really you know very little of life: why did I marry the old Duke of Myrtlebank you ask? In the first place, because I liked his title; and, in the next place, because I could, as a married woman of my present rank in life, enjoy certain privileges which are regarded as absolute imprudences in single women, however great their fortunes may be. You will understand what I mean when you are married and admired as I am; but you will have a handsome, elegant young fellow in the Marquis of Rose-

bower,

bower, who, perhaps, you may love for some time, even when he is your husband."

"My *husband!* who? the Marquis of Rosebower?"

"Why, surely, you will not affect to be a stranger to what all the world knows? Nonsense—why, my dear, it is talked of in his own family as a fixed thing;—why will you deny it? I own I was rather surprised, as every body said that *you*, Lady Jane, would be Marchioness of Rosebower: Well, never mind, perhaps I may be divorced soon, and then you shall have my Duke."

"Thank you, my dear Duchess; but although

although Rosebower may have forsaken me for the Countess of Grassmere, I am not at my last prayers yet; so pray keep your Duke safe until I am."

While this conversation passed between the three ladies, the Duke of Zephyrly solicited a conference with Sir Edward Fitzalbion, which proved, in some degree, the truth of her grace's assertion, in regard to the Marquis, whose father formally made proposals of marriage, on his behalf, with the Countess of Grassmere; and his Grace assured the admiral, that if the proposals were accepted, Lord Alexander would divide his fortune, which was very considerable, with the Marquis, immediately on the nuptials, and bind himself

self to leave him the other half of it at his death; which, with the ducal estate, that must be his with the title, he could settle the whole fortune of the Countess on herself. Sir Edward replied, that he would certainly inform his niece of the honour intended her by so noble a family, and leave her to decide for herself; but he had some reason to think that her affections were engaged, and her hand promised to the youngest son of his friend, Lord Charlewood. The Duke said,—

"And surely, my dear Sir Edward, you will not consent that a lady of her fortune and title, should marry the younger son of an earl, when the heir apparent of a duke offers her his hand."

"*Choice*

" *Choice* is a point so essential to her happiness that I shall not control her inclination; and I assure you, my Lord Duke, that her excellent understanding will teach her to form a right judgment."

" Yet, in the present case, may not gratitude and compassion bias her in favour of Mr. Elmsberry? for report gave her affections, just before the duel, to the handsome East Indian."

" Report is not always to be believed: in the Charlewood family my niece has been like a third sister—and as there are three young men in that *family*, no wonder *report* should give her to one of them —and I certainly believe that Elmsberry's danger discovered, first, even to herself,

to

to which her heart gave the preference. It was said also, that the Marquis was very partial to Lady Jane Elmsberry.

" Perhaps he might, before he beheld the Countess of Grassmere.—Poor fellow, I am concerned to think he is likely to be disappointed.—Lady Jane, too, I hear, is going to be married to Lord Splendormore;—and Lady Ellen O'Roon to Lord Heathland; so my son is quite thrown out of any chance with *them.* Lady Charlotte is too serious and retired to please him; and the great fortune, Miss Golightly, is by no means a girl whom he can choose for a wife; for although Rosebower has had his youthful follies, he is neither a simple nor an immoral character; he admires

spright-

sprightliness in a woman—but levity disgusts him; and, I assure you, he has frequently set up for a grave adviser to his mother and sister."

"Mr. Elmsberry speaks highly of his friendly and sensible conduct on the morning of the duel; and, by what I have seen of the Marquis since, I think he deserves an amiable wife. Lady Ellen, and my niece are, as far as I can judge of the minds of women, seriously attached, but, between ourselves, I have not that idea of Lady Jane, who I believe only trifles in her lively way with Splendormore; and I think the daughters of Lady Charlewoord, have been so excellently brought up, that they will make their husbands happy. I see my

niece

niece coming this way, and as, no doubt, it will be a satisfaction both to your Grace and the Marquis, if you hear her own sentiments on the subject of our conversation, I will leave you to say what you think proper in his behalf."

Sir Edward met the Countess, and told her that the duke of Zephyrly wished to converse with her for a few minutes, and immediately turned down another walk. The Duke was delighted with the opportunity afforded him by Sir Edward, to plead for his son, and said every thing which the heart of a fond, ambitious father could dictate, to promote a union between the Marquis and the rich, beautiful, and amiable Heiress of Grassmere and Rockalba.

Stella

Stella listened with polite attention to the Duke, and, while he was speaking, recollected the apparent encouragement which she had given the Marquis, when she was piqued at the alteration in Arrandale's behaviour, and she felt both vexed and ashamed to think, that her own thoughtless conduct might have flattered his hopes of being accepted as an honourable and serious admirer; and she considered the disagreeable task of telling the father, that she rejected the son, was a just punishment for the folly. She blushed, looked confused, and remained silent so long after the Duke had ceased speaking, that he hoped she would decide in favour of his son: at length, with modest hesitation, she assured his Grace, that if she had at any time

time appeared partial to the Marquis, it was owing to an idea that she had formed of his being attached to the dear friend, and amiable companion of her youth, Lady Jane Elmsberry, and not upon her own account; as the marked attention with which Mr. Elmsberry had honoured her, had long engaged her affections. The Duke said, that he was extremely sorry any misunderstanding should have made the Countess impute fickleness to his son, and subject him to a rejection, which would give him pain. She requested the Duke would assure the Marquis, that she was obliged to him for the preference he had given her, and that she should always have a friendship for him, as the friend of Mr. Elmsberry.

The Duke handed her to a saloon, which was prepared for a concert; but, to the regret of all who knew his vocal powers, Mr. Elmsberry was not sufficiently recovered to exert them; he was, however, able to stay in the saloon, and felt great pleasure in attending to a rich display of amateur abilities.

Stella was pleased to observe that Rosebower did not appear inconsolable, although she had reason to think the Duke had informed him she had declined his suit. When they met, he behaved to her with his usual easy freedom; but devoted himself to Lady Jane, who was uncommonly gay and agreeable. Lord Splendormore, who had been expected the evening before, was not yet arrived nor were Sir John and his bride.

CHAPTER VI.

A disaster, an arrival, and the esplanade.

THE next day, the Earl and Countess of Loughmead, with Lady Ellen, dined at Rockalba Castle, and just as the dessert came upon table, Sir John Hazard was announced. He entered with a more serious look than common, and Lady Loughmead immediately asked, in a

voice of apprehension, why her son was not with him.

"His Lordship will be here in the evening; he is coming in a post-chaise."

"Some accident has happened to him," said the Earl, "in that confounded, new-fangled gig, which I suppose he knew not how to manage."

"You are right there, my Lord, it was a cursed disaster sure enough; but thank heaven he is alive, and no bones of *his* broken; my poor mother-in-law has feared worse. Lord Splendormore wanted to get before me in rather a rugged road, near a gravel pit, when behold, the wheels slipped suddenly into a deep

a deep rut, which overturned the gig, and threw them into the pit, which, by good luck, was shallow, or they must have been dashed to pieces; the horses stood still in a moment, and the carriage lay on the road. My poor Eva was dreadfully alarmed for her mother, who she thought was killed; I sat her safely upon the ground, at some distance, while, actually trembling with dread, I went with the servants down into the pit;—both lay motionless; the Countess was quite senseless, Splendormore was sensible of pain when we lifted him up; his handsome face was shockingly bruised and scratched, his hands, and his knees, have also suffered greatly; but fortunately he escaped fractures and dislocations."

"Thank

"Thank God for that!" exclaimed Lady Loughmead. "And is he really able to travel; will he be here to-night?"

"He is now on the road in my mother's travelling carriage; it overtook us while we were waiting for a surgeon, whom I had sent for to the nearest village. The Countess has broken her left arm in two places, has received a violent contusion in her forehead, and terribly disfigured her face and neck. The sufferers were conveyed to the surgeon's house; but no persuasion could prevail on Lord Splendormore to quit the coach, or suffer the surgeon to touch him, for as he knew we were not above fifteen miles from Weymouth, he was resolved to

to come home, and have the advice of doctor R."

"I am rejoiced that he was so wise," said his father. "How have you left the poor Countess?"

"Not in any danger, as the surgeon thinks; we have left her at his house with her own woman; Eva wanted to stay, but he would not let her, as her mother must be kept profoundly quiet; and seeing how greatly she was affected, he intreated me to take her home, as she could not possibly be of service to the Countess, at present, and might injure her own health. So on one seat of the coach reclines his lordship, covered with a shawl, because his face shall not be seen,

seen, and the other is occupied by my weeping wife, and her woman, with the smelling bottle."

"If the Countess of Everbloom had come in the yacht, with her son," said Lady Charlewood, "instead of mounting the gig with Lord Splendormore, she would have performed her duty as a mother, and have escaped this dreadful accident."

"True, she might; but the gay dowager was cursedly sick of nursing her darling boy, and could not withstand the solicitations of Lady Loughmead's darling boy, to let him have the superlative felicity of driving her to Weymouth in his Westminster gig; which she

she mounted with glee, not dreaming of his taking a toss with her into a gravel pit, after whirling her in safety through the streets, and Hyde Park, where, I assure you, we were as much stared at, as was our model, the Burdettian car. I made his groom mount Splendormore's gig, and he has brought it safely to the inn, where I mean to leave mine."

"Curse the gig! I shall hate the sight of it," said Lord Loughmead; "and so you all left poor Everbloom to come by himself?"

"No, indeed, my Lord; the young peer is not so neglected as you imagine; a very lovely young widow has under-

taken to nurse him, during the voyage, as she *doats* on the sea; and also *doats* on her poor, dear, wounded cousin;—for you must know the fair creature is niece to the Countess, to whom she flew for consolation immediately on the death of her husband, General Lawless, killed in a duel at Jersey; from which island she arrived just in time to take another voyage with her cousin Everbloom, whose coronet, I believe, hangs before her sparkling eyes; an air-drawn, glittering vision, like Macbeth's dagger; a gay thing which she is anxiously trying to grasp at; and I shall not wonder if she succeed, and fill up the void which th at cursed mercenary, Fanfaletta has left in the young man's weak little heart; for the widow Lawless knows how

to

to be alluring, even in her weeds, in which she has studied the becoming, more than the solemn: and she is *so* gentle, *so* soothing, to her pretty nursling, as she calls the earl, that she contrives to keep him in a good humour; and his mother and sister have found him extremely cross, and troublesome, ever since he has been confined."

"Faith, the widow has struck out amusement for herself in her forlorn state," said Heathland, laughing; "and having had one bad husband, she will endeavour to bring up the second according to her own fancy; and by the time she can marry with propriety, her *nursling* will be grown a fine, stout fellow.

I suppose you visited this lady, when you were in Jersey, Miss Stuart."

"Not since the death of my mother, and but seldom before; mere ceremonial visits only, for she was so gay, and, at the same time, so fascinating in her manner, that my parents feared that she would inspire me with a love for dissipation."

"I forgot to tell your Ladyship, that Splendormore particularly requests to be carried to your house, not choosing to shew his scratched face to the ladies at Rockalba Castle."

"Well, well, poor fellow, he shall be conveyed immediately to his own room,

room, and see no body but the doctor, his father, myself, and his attendants; I suppose Donally is with him?"

"Yes, and has won my friendship, by the sincere proofs which he has given of the most affectionate attachment to his Lord; I thought he would have died on the spot, when he beheld him so disfigured; but poor Donnally soon became the most active and useful of us all; he was as tender as a nurse, and as strong as Hercules; Oh! how he cursed the harmless gig! and I left him riding close by the coach, as if he thought that would be over next, and he would be ready to catch his master."

"That is exactly like the faithful Donnally;

nally; and Mc Gennis, O'Roon's man, and Reily, the Earl's, are equally attached; so, indeed, are the Irish servants in general, when they are kindly treated. I think, doctor, we had better go now, and be ready to receive my son; will you come my Lord? Ellen and O'Roon, you will accompany us; he will not mind *your* seeing him disfigured."

"Lady Ellen is very timid; your ladyship had better leave her here, and permit me to go with you, as I am more experienced; and his Lordship will not mind me any more than he would an old nurse."

"My dear Mrs. Moreland, how very kind you are; your presence will give me

me fortitude, for, indeed, I dread to see him."

The Earl and Countess of Loughmead, Mrs. Moreland, Doctor R. and Mr. O'Roon, went to the house, which the Earl had hired to receive the bruised Splendormore, who arrived in the dusk of the evening, a spectacle of terror to his alarmed parents; for his eyes were closed, and his features so totally deformed, by the cuts and swollen bruises, that it was impossible to trace the least resemblance of what he had been, when he quitted Weymouth. His hands and knees were also so swollen and stiff, that he was obliged to be lifted out of the carriage like a corpse, and carried up into his chamber. Lady Eva

Hazard

Hazard did not get out; but Sir John, went home with her to the house that was taken for the Everblooms, and themselves.

Doctor R. after a strict examination, assured the terrified parents, that their son had received no serious injury, and that, when the swellings were reduced, and the wounds cleansed from the gravel, he would recover rapidly; these words consoled them a little, although they suspected that the doctor feared to tell them the worst; his Lordship seemed insensible of every thing but pain, which was increased by the slightest movement, or noise; therefore, after the doctor had applied the proper remedies, and said all he could to comfort

fort his patient, he gave him a strong opiate, and sat up with him to preserve the silence so necessary for the recovery of his disordered frame.

As the evening was extremely fine and calm, the Rockalba party walked late on the esplanade, where they met the Duchess of Myrtlebank, and Miss Golightly, surrounded with English and foreign princes, with whom they were coquetting in the most conspicuous manner. The Duchess, without relinquishing the royal arms which supported her, stopped out of curiosity, and addressing herself to Stella, who she thought looked very dowdy, being wrapped in a long lace veil, said:

"La!

"La! my dear Countess, what a shocking accident; I hear that the elegant Splendormore is just brought home, smashed to death."

"Not *to death,* Duchess, or you would not see Lady Ellen, and Mr. O'Roon, walking here in public, which proves that he is not even *dangerously* hurt."

"If he *had* it would have served him right, for choosing that old figure, Lady Everbloom, for his companion, in a new, delightful carriage, instead of some young beauty, who would have graced it. Well I declare, if he had only canted the old woman into the gravel pit, it would have been a laughable trick, and what she

she deserved, for taking the place of a young one; but it was ridiculous for such a fine young fellow to let her drag him along with her. It seems they have left her dead upon the road."

"The Countess could not proceed on account of a fractured arm, but her life is not in danger. Your grace has heard an exaggerated account of this terrible accident, and I am amazed at your treating the distressing subject so lightly."

"Do not be angry, my dear, grave Countess; but I cannot help laughing for the soul of me, at the idea of the old Countess whirling heels over head into a gravel pit; and if a certain cross old

Duke

Duke had taken a whirl along with her, instead of the young and handsome Splendormore—"

"Oh, fye! Flavia, how can you talk so inconsiderately? The *prudent* Countess of Grassmere will actually blush for you," said Miss Golightly, archly winking at her princely companion, and then laughing affectedly; but observing, with a stare of surprise, that neither her sister nor herself had, at that time, excited risibility in any other person, she was vexed and mortified, so was the Duchess, and they were much more so when, on meeting the Dukes of Myrtlebank and Zephyrly, with Lord Alexander, the Princes resigned their fair companions, soon after they had conversed

versed a while with those noblemen, and, wishing them good evening, immediately joined the Rockalba party. Attracted by the modest, unobtrusive charms of a young Countess, whose conversation was unembarrassed, brilliant, and sensible, they congratulated themselves on their glorious exchange; the foreign Princes were enraptured, for she conversed with them fluently in their native languages, French and Italian, as did also the Ladies Charlotte and Jane; Lady Ellen understood them perfectly, but spoke with timidity and hesitation.

The Duchess of Myrtlebank and her sister, had learned two provincial jargons of their French governess, which she called French and Italian; her father had

kept

kept a house, for the accommodation of travellers, in a village at the extremity of Dauphine, which he dignified by the appellation of hotel; Mademoiselle Jaqueline was a lively brunette, who was very attentive and agreeable to travellers, and married an itinerant musician of Savoy, who taught her to sing, and well they both loved the merry dance. The father died, and left his business and property to his daughter and her husband, Signor Bambolini. Mirth enlivened their abode until the revolution, when an English Lady of fashion, captivated with Signor Bambolini's musical talents, brought him to England in her train, and, rather uncivilly, *forgot* to bring the wife with them. However, the lively Madame Bambolini made a piti-

ful

ful story to a young Englishman, who was so pleased with the droll mixture of mirth and sorrow in the forsaken French woman, that he brought her away with him, disguised as an Italian Page, made her assume the female attire again, when they arrived at Dover, kept her in elegant lodgings for a few months, and then forsook her. She immediately advertised for a situation as governess, and as such was received into the house of Mr. Golightly, where she gave proofs of her versatile talents, by rendering her young pupils as *accomplished* as herself: when she had *completed* their education, she fortunately heard of an established boarding school for young ladies that was to be disposed of, in the vicinity of the metropolis; she told the

Golightlys'

Goliglitlys', and coaxed them to lend her the money, which they did; and hearing that her runaway husband was a teacher of music in London, she sought him out, and communicated her prospects. He embraced his dear wife, apologized, to her satisfaction, for the step he had taken, and the Bambolinis', as emigrants of quality, were soon established in their fashionable seminary for the education of young ladies. Parents were charmed with the noble house and gardens; and, above all, with the quality manners of the elegant Bambolinis', who engaged to give their lovely children a *finished* education.

These particulars Lord Charlewood had heard from his valet, La Fleur, who had

had been next door neighbour to the Bambolinis', when they lived in Dauphiné, and had renewed his acquaintance with the Signor since he came to England,—and having recommended him to play the tenor at a ball, given by the Countess in town, related what he knew *then* of him, and the sequel of the history, when it came to his knowledge, to his Lord and Lady.—And now, on one of the princes remarking how deficient the Duchess of Myrtlebank and her sister were in their knowledge of French and Italian, the Earl could not resist informing his Highness, that their governess, who imposed herself on their father and aunt, for an emigrant Marchioness, had never figured higher, in France, than as the landlady

of a mean auberge, who had left her bar to come here as the mistress of an adventurer; which the Earl said was a sufficient excuse for all the errors in the education and conduct of those ladies—who had been as unfortunate in the aunt, who supplied the place of their mother, as in their governess.

The Duchess of Zephyrly, Lady Frivoli, and the Marquis of Rosebower, came late, and immediately joined the Rockalba party, which was soon augmented by the Duke and Lord Alexander, who left his grace of Myrtlebank to sustain, as well as he could, the burthen of an ill-tempered wife and sisters, who could not conceal the mortification they had felt at being left with only three

old men, while the envied, and almost abhorred, Countess of Grassmere, was admired and followed by all the royalty, and handsome fashionables, which adorned the esplanade. They vented their spleen in the most illiberal remarks, and scandalous falsities, of Stella and her three amiable young friends, and rendered the whole of their conversation so extremely disagreeable to the Duke of Zephyrly, and Lord Alexander, who had, in vain, endeavoured to change the discourse, that *they* added to the mortification of the fair traducers, by quitting them, and joining the traduced beauties; and never had those ladies appeared more beautiful and amiable, or the Duchess of Myrtlebank, and Miss Golightly, more despicable in the eyes of

good sense, than they did that evening; for the venomous breath of slander, which the two latter ladies exhaled, recoiled on themselves, and seemed to blast the personal beauties which nature had bestowed on them; for when envy and malice pour their poison in the heart, the baneful influence deforms the features, deadens the complexion, eclipses the brilliant lustre of the eyes, and envenoms the tongue.

CHAPTER VII.

Anna, of Hybla Hill.

(O'ROON'S STORY.)

As Lord Splendormore, though not in the least danger, continued, for several days, so disfigured and uneasy from his wounds and bruises, that he kept his bed in silence and darkness, not choosing to be seen, even by his brother and sister, they both staid at Rockalba Castle.

Lord

Lord Heathland and Mr. Arrandale were gone, for a few days, to Brighton; the Prince being at the Pavilion, they wished to pay their duty. Mr. Russell had taken his nephew and niece to Plymouth, as he had some affairs to transact with a merchant of that sea-port; and Lord and Lady Charlewood were gone to pass the day with the Loughmeads, as neither the Earl nor the Countess chose to leave the house, as Splendormore had no objection to *their* visits, and they frequently relieved the doctor, whom he could scarcely bear to be absent from him a minute. Therefore, the Rockalba party being, for that day, composed of Sir Edward, the Countess of Grassmere, Lady Ellen, Mrs. Moreland, Elmsberry, and O'Roon, the

the Ladies Charlotte and Jane having been taken out by the Duchess of Zephyrly and Lady Frivola, with whom they were to dine, the Admiral requested O'Roon to perform his promise of confiding to that select few, as Lady Ellen was already in his confidence, the nature of his attachment in Ireland, to which the Earl was a stranger. O'Roon replied;

" That you should interest yourself, Sir Edward, in an affair so consequential to my happiness, does me honour, as it evinces a wish to be my friend; and I flatter myself that, notwithstanding my clandestine proceedings, you will not, after you have heard my story, deem me unworthy your friendship.

" When

" When I came into the possession of my estate, on the banks of the Banna, I went immediately to reside on it, in order to inspect the improvements which I wished to be made throughout the lands, and which, as they are delightfully situated, and very extensive, deserve every attention that agricultural labour and knowledge can bestow.

" Not long after I had been at Shamrock Dale, the name of my estate, as I was surveying a piece of ground, which I wanted to lay into my garden, a lovely young woman passed us, with a curtsey of polished manners, and the blush of rural innocence; she wore a white jacket and petticoat, and a large straw hat, wreathed with fresh-gathered violets, and tied

tied on the left side of her neck with green ribbons; she carried a small milk-pail, and, if I had wanted to pourtray Thomson's Lavinia, I would have taken a sketch of this beautiful maid. My eyes followed her light steps, and when they could behold her no longer, I asked my steward who she was? He replied, 'Anna, of Hybla Hill; she has been for milk to your Honour's dairy; she comes for it every morning, and pays for it, at stated periods, in honey. Indeed, I should have introduced Mrs. Fletcher to your Honour, for she was much esteemed by my old master, and is by all who know her.—The father of Mrs. Fletcher was the vicar of our parish, a very learned good man; but, lord love him, he was too benevolent to the poor

cottagers to save much. Mr. Fletcher was his curate, and fell in love with his daughter; Mr. Donovan regarded the amiable young man, and consented that he should marry Miss Anna Donovan, and a happy couple they were. Our good vicar died soon after, and as the living was in the gift of my master, he very justly bestowed it on young Fletcher; but, Ahone! he was killed by a fall from his horse, one dark night, as he was returning over the Moorland, after praying by a sick cottager: poor Mrs Fletcher, and the little Anna! it was a sad scene of distress when his horse returned to the parsonage without him; and then when he was brought home dead! Well, my master was very kind, he had the widowed mother,

and

and fatherless babe, removed to the cottage where they now dwell. Oh, what a dear little prattling gramachree, of five years old, was Anna, when she first came to Hybla Hill; and she has grown up under our eyes, as it were, into that beautiful and virtuous maiden who passed us just now.' I give you my worthy Calhagan's own words, as nearly as I can recollect; and you may imagine the impression they made on a heart already charmed with the interesting subject of them. He asked me if I would walk to the cottage that morning? I could not resist the tempting proposal."

"I believe not," said Sir Edward, smiling; "nor would your father, at your years."

"As we approached, we were saluted by the most fragrant breezes I had ever inhaled; I soon beheld a cottage at the foot of the hill; woodbine and jessamine clothed the front, threw themselves over the thatched roof, and around the chimnies; the hill, of easy ascent, was covered, on the side next the cottage, with aromatic herbs and shrubs; and, from a more rocky part, descended a rivulet, which meandered through a small orchard, and a garden, profusely decorated with flowers, and flowed into the Banna, to the brink of which the garden nearly reached—washed on one side, by the rivulet, over which was a rustic bridge, and guarded, on the other, by a ridge of artificial rocks, which terminated

nated, next the Banna, in a grotto, beautifully adorned, and forming a charming retreat.

" What an unexpected sight was this blooming spot; this paradise of sweets, rising in the wild waste of uncultivated lands—for such was more than half the estate at that time. Before we entered the cot, Calhagan took me round the garden to a neat colonade, painted green, beneath which were arranged, with nice regularity, a number of glass and other bee-hives; and he told me, that Mrs. Fletcher, from her early youth, had made the culture of bees her amusement, and, since the death of her husband, had turned it to a merchandize of some profit, sufficient, with the produce of

of her well-stored spot of ground, and little farm yard, to support her daughter, and herself, in comfortable independency.

"The busy hum of the bees, the soft fall of the rivulet, the warblings of various feathered songsters from their leafy coverts, added to the perfumed breezes, sweeping through the blossomed orchard, seemed to attune my soul to love, when Mrs. Fletcher sent her blooming daughter to invite us into the cottage. Anna was without a hat, and the simple wreath of violets adorned the most luxuriant ringlets of light auburn that I ever beheld. She stood before me an exquisite model of feminine perfection, animated by the interesting

blushes

blushes of innate modesty; while I gazed on her delicate beauty, while I listened to the harmony of her voice, my captivated soul never formed a thought, or wish, unworthy the pure object who created those thoughts and wishes, immaculate as herself.

"She conducted us into the cottage, the interior of which displayed the elegant taste of the owners. Mrs. Fletcher received me with the ease of a well-educated female, not unacquainted with polished manners, though dwelling beneath a roof of thatch.

"While Mrs. Fletcher was talking to me, my eyes in glancing around the room, in search of Anna, caught the view of some beautiful landscapes and flower

flower pieces, a piano forte, a Spanish guitar, and a quantity of music, neatly covered and arranged, in a painted high stand for the purpose.

" Presently, the lovely Anna entered, with a tray containing several sorts of preserved fruit, part of a honey-comb, a bowl of milk, and some delicious home-made wine, with cakes still more delicious to me, because Mrs. Fletcher said they were made by Anna. Never had been a repast so excellent to me as that rural banquet of sweets. I noticed the music, and requested that one of the ladies would favour me with an air or a lesson. Mrs. Fletcher said, " My daughter is very timid, we make our slight knowledge of music a pleasing

recreation

recreation for ourselves; but cannot presume to offer it as an entertainment to others. I asked her leave to try the instrument, and played, from recollection, a modern overture, and then looked over the operas; the newest among them was the Woodman; I sung the "Streamlet," and my heart placed, "Anna," in the room of "Emily,"—Anna seemed pleased with my singing; and I wished to prolong my stay. I wished also to give her courage, and sung from memory Braham's "Beautiful Maid," which to them had the charm of novelty; and then, taking up Sheridan's excellent opera of the Duenna, I concluded my vocal performances with. "Had I a heart for falsehood framed;" to which I gave due expression from the

pure

pure feelings of *my heart* for the modest Anna. But I shall weary you with this lover-like prolixity, yet I wished you to know the particulars of this first visit."

"You have taken us to such a charming place, and introduced us to such interesting personages, that I think I can answer for all your auditors, as well as myself, that we are in no hurry to quit Hybla Hill; and I admire your choice of songs so appropriate; did the lovely Anna choose any as applicable?"

"She did, Sir Edward; for after running over an easy lesson, she sung the pathetic air from the Heiress, "For tenderness formed," with such exquisite feeling,

feeling, that she affected herself, and her hearers, even to tears. I ejaculated mentally, angel of innocence! Never shalt thou find me a Gayville to shock thine ears with libertine proposals. When she had finished the song, I behaved to her with the serious respect, which I should have done to a person of the most exalted rank, and paid Mrs. Fletcher the compliments which were her due, on the skill of her fair pupil; I then wished them a good morning, and requested permission to pay my respects to them frequently.

"As I was returning home, I observed, between Hybla and Shamrock Hall, a cottage, with good pasture ground, and a cow-house in tolerable

repair.

repair. I went immediately to my tenants in the cot, and told them that I should send them some cows to graze in the meadow, and if they would pay proper attention to them; they should have their cot rent free, and as much milk as their family required; and I desired the good woman to carry some every morning to Mrs. Fletcher, of Hybla Hill, who would give her a bit of honey-comb now and then, for her trouble. The good woman broke out in a thousand blessings on Mrs.. Fletcher, and her daughter, said she would carry milk to the world's end for them; who were so kind to her and her little ones, and shewed me their Sunday frocks, which were made out of Anna's white dresses; I gazed on the frocks like a de-

votee

votee on the relics of a saint, and fearing to grow remarkable, if the woman talked any more about Anna, I quitted the cottage, and sent Calhagen back, to inform Mrs. Fletcher of my arrangement, which seemed to give great pleasure to the worthy man, who has a paternal regard for the amiable young creature, whom he had known from her infancy, and whose father, and grandfather, he had revered for their pious doctrine, and active benevolence; and every mark of respect and delicacy I paid to Anna, and her mother, was gratefully received by him.

"Weeks and months glided swiftly away, and every day I visited, under some pretence or other, Hybla Hill; for there

there, I may justly say, dwelt the soul of O'Roon. Our hearts were united by mutual love, but no *word* of *love* escaped my lips, lest, on my parents account, Mrs. Fletcher should think it her duty to banish me from my sole delight."

"As my house and gardens were undergoing a complete repair, and vast alterations, I was quite exempt from the interruption of visitors, even my own family were not come to the hall, until it was in a state to receive them. All my music found its way to the cottage, I arranged it in the stand, painted by Anna, and my heart beat with delight. She possessed from nature every requisite for a fine singer and musician,

and

and I had received every advantage that the first professors could bestow, therefore had it in my power to improve her excellent talents, which, as she had acquired no bad habits, was an easy task. In painting, also, my judgment aided her skill and taste for both, which she was infinitely more indebted to nature, than to art. Every day I discovered new perfections in my Anna, and every day she grew dearer to O'Roon; and it was no wonder, if Anna became partial to him, in such an unfrequented spot as Shamrock Dale."

"Mrs. Fletcher, from the time she lost her husband so suddenly, had been subject to a pulmonary complaint, which had hitherto been subdued by the power

of

of medicine; but at the commencement of winter it returned, accompanied by a low fever, that depressed her spirits, relaxed her frame, and threatened her dissolution. I beheld her melancholy, anxious looks at Anna, and well I knew the feelings of her virtuous and delicate mind. She had not a relative in the world to take charge of her young and beautiful daughter, when she was gone; even those who had answered for her at the baptismal font were dead; the worthy Calhagan was a widower, and lived at Shamrock Hall; and I was too young for a guardian; and, as she thought, too high born for the husband of Anna. Thus I read her maternal looks, and thus I answered them, for my resolution had long been fixed. "My dear Madam,

dam, if a request, which I have long wished to make you, meets a favourable answer from your lips, I shall be encouraged to look forward to felicity. Will you sanction my honourable addresses to Miss Fletcher, for it is impossible for me to live without her; therefore, my dear *mother*, for so I must call you, will you bless me with your angel daughter? She objected on account of my parents; but I reminded her of my independency, and that I was of age to choose for myself; that domestic happiness was to be prized before every other blessing, which the world could bestow, as the softest soother in illness, the kindest comforter in affliction, and the most faithful friend in adversity. It rendered toil a pleasure, and the most frugal meal

more delicious than a costly banquet. And who, I exclaimed, would sacrifice these treasures of intrinsic worth, to ambition, and the tinsel-glare of cumbrous state? I never will; and as I know that the sentiments of my father, and elder brother, differ materially from mine, on this point, I am resolved not to argue against them, nor to act contrary to the *advice* of Lord Splendormore, and the *commands* of the Earl of Loughmead, I shall obey the dictates of reason, honour, and virtuous love; and though my earthly father may for a while disapprove my conduct, I know that heaven, and my own soul, will approve. Tears rolled down her pallid cheeks, while I was speaking; then, glowing with a hectic bloom, she replied:

"It

"'It grieves me, Mr. O'Roon, to be compelled, by imperious necessity, to consent, that you, for the sake of my child, should act contrary to the inclinations of your noble family; but I have weighed her honour, her virtuous fame; the truly honourable, and pious characters of her father, and my own, against pride and avarice; the former *I* found preponderate, like gems of high value; the latter fly up like gaudy feathers, therefore I cannot hesitate; my moments are precious. Death, who has long been creeping slily towards me, now comes with hasty strides; what *is* to be done, must be *done* soon, or my lips will not pronounce a blessing on my son.' I threw myself at her feet, pressed her almost transparent hand to my lips, and con-

jured her to plead my cause with Anna for a speedy nuptials.

"I fetched my lovely girl out of the garden, and told her that her mother had a request to make; on her answer to which my future happiness depended. I led her to Mrs. Fletcher, and left them together. I sat down in the grotto, and felt perfectly satisfied with my conduct, yet designed, if possible, to keep my marriage a secret from my family, until Splendormore had married according to my father's inclination, as then I thought he would not be so anxious about my marrying in a noble family."

"Mrs. Fletcher, leaning on her daughter, entered the grotto; she held out her hand

hand to me, I gave her mine; she joined it with Anna's, and said, 'Take her Mr. O'Roon, take my Anna, and may gracious heaven render you a blessing to each other! And may your noble parents forgive this act of disobedience, and receive my child to their arms with parental affection!' I clasped my blushing Anna to my bosom in silent rapture, she had consented to be mine, and I was blessed beyond expression! Proudly I viewed my beautiful, accomplished maid, as one who would grace the noblest family, and adorn the highest circles.

"As the next day was Sunday, and I did not intend, on account of my Anna's character, to keep my marriage a secret in Shamrock Dale, I rode to the town, and

and gave orders for the banns to be published, knowing *that* proceeding was less likely to come to my father's knowledge, than taking out a licence in Dublin, where we were all so well known."

"The three Sundays passed; and on Monday morning Anna became my bride. Mrs. Fletcher, who had exerted herself to be present at the ceremony, was so fatigued, although she had been conveyed to, and from the church in my carriage, that she fainted several times after we returned to the cottage, and alarmed us greatly. How her illness imbittered our bridal felicity! It stopped the festivities, which my tenants had prepared to celebrate my nuptials, for she was so universally respected, and beloved,

in

in our *little* world, that no heart could be gay when she was in danger.

" As the interior repairs of the hall were not completed, and the cottage was very commodious, I there fixed a small domestic establishment, and if Mrs. Fletcher had enjoyed perfect health, we should have been completely happy; but alas! she survived our marriage only one week!—Most sincerely did I sympathize with my Anna for our mutual loss; the only consolation we had was, that our excellent mother had died happy, in the thought of having left her young and lovely daughter, in the protecting arms of a fond and faithful husband.

" Then, Sir Edward, did I glory in a conduct,

conduct which had disarmed death of his keenest arrows; when I heard her say 'Bless thee—bless thee, my son! thou hast softened the pangs of death—thou art the husband of my Anna, and I can die in peace: heaven bless my children!' Those were her last words—she *blessed* me.

"Mr. Macklin, the good vicar, kindly invited us to the parsonage; but my sensible Anna would not quit the cottage; dear and sacred to us both were the remains of our beloved mother; we could not fly from them with disgust; we visited every spot that she admired;—nursed, with tender care, every plant on which she had besowed peculiar attention, and strictly adhered to her

her example in the management of the bees. We talked of her incessantly, recalled her gentle manners, and mild looks to our recollection—repeated her excellent precepts, and engraved them on our hearts; we endeavoured to repair the misfortune of her *death* by making her *live* in our memory.

"My father was too deeply immerged in state affairs, and my brother in the gaieties of the metropolis, to visit Shamrock Dale; and my mother's time was sufficiently occupied in receiving elegant parties at her house in Dublin, and at Splendormore Castle, which is within twelve miles of it, and the usual routine of fashionable life, to think of burying herself in my old solitary man-

sion. However, in the Spring, I requested that my sister might be permitted to visit me, as I wished to consult her taste in some embellishments, and wrote that I would fetch her.

"My dear Ellen gained the desired permission, and appointed a time for me to visit them at Splendormore Castle, from whence she would return with me to Shamrock Hall. The happiness Anna promised herself in the friendship of my sister reconciled her to my absence.

"I was received with such affection by my parents that I felt inclined to tell them of my marriage; but before I found a good opportunity, my father spoke of the high prospects which he had

had formed for increasing the wealth and dignity of the family, by the marriages of his three children. That silenced me—I could not expose myself to my father's displeasure, and the deprivation of my sister's company, which I knew would severely wound the affectionate Anna.

" During our journey I communicated my story to Lady Ellen; she kindly sympathised with me, and grieved to think my honour, as a lover, could not assimilate with my duty as a son; and advised me to keep my marriage a secret from my father still longer. Anna, by my desire, was to meet us at the cottage—and a more tender meeting never took place between two females; I

clasped

clasped the dear ones to my heart, and invoked heaven to unite them in the soft bands of sisterly affection."

"And your invocation was heard, my brother; for I can assure the company, that I thought your Anna the most interesting and loveliest of women—and her Hybla the most enchanting spot I had ever beheld. We passed our time so happily, both at the hall and the cottage, in such a new and delightful manner to *me*, that, if I had been as poetically harmonized as my brother, I should have celebrated in song the charms of rural felicity, for I certainly enjoyed it in the highest perfection at Shamrock Dale; excepting the want of a shepherd to tell me soft tales of love. In vain I

searched

searched over hills, vales, and forests, for a swain young, handsome, and refined, like O'Roon's rural nymph; but no such treasure could I find: Alas! poor I was forced to leave the flowery banks of Banna, just as forlorn as I went to them; and I then became a wanderer to another island, where I have luckily found a noble swain to my mind, and still more luckily to the mind of papa; for a timid girl, who has no Shamrock Dale to take refuge in, must not venture to marry clandestinely."

"I am no friend," said Sir Edward, "to disobedience, which is the cause of clandestine marriages; but I must own, if any son is excusable, it is my friend O'Roon: circumstanced as he was, when

Mrs.

Mrs. Fletcher was dying, he had no other honourable step to take; and it is my opinion, that if Lord Loughmead had heard the story, as I have, he would approve of your conduct. Put it in the form of a letter, addressed to me, and I flatter myself that I may be able to reconcile your father to this marriage with an amiable creature, who is deficient in point of fortune *only*. Have you an heir to Shamrock Dale?"

"Yes, Sir, and my little Dermot O'Roon has a sister Ellen, of whom he is very fond; yet, in all this time, has the secret of my marriage been kept from my father, without enjoining any one to be silent on the subject, and, perhaps, for that very reason; he has heard

heard something of my attachment to a cottager, and has formed his own conjectures concerning the *nature* of it, without speaking to me seriously; and, I believe, he proposed my coming with them to England, in order to break it off: to the proposal I consented, partly to oblige the Earl, and partly to make observations on the agricultural methods practised in this country, that I may adopt them in my own; yet I assure you, that the parting with my wife and children cost me many moments of uneasiness."

"I shall take more pleasure in your song," said Stella, "than ever I did, now you have made me so well acquainted with the charming subject of it."

"I hope

"I hope you will give me the pleasure of introducing her to you in person; I wish you would pass a summer with us in Ireland?"

The Countess replied, that she believed her uncle intended to indulge her with a visit to that kingdom, of which she had heard so much.

CHAPTER VIII.

A coquettish wife and a gay widow.

Mr. Elmsberry was now perfectly recovered, and the Earl of Everbloom was able to walk, of a morning, on the Esplanade, leaning on the arm of his widowed cousin; his mother had been removed from the surgeon's to her house in Weymouth, but was still confined to her room, as the cuts which she had received

ceived in her face, from some sharp flints, were not healed, and threatened to leave scars, that must inevitably destroy her beauty. Lord Splendormore was very fortunate; he had slightly cut his face, but the injuries he had received were merely temporary, and no longer confined him.

When the Earl of Everbloom met Mr. Elmsberry, he said, holding out his hand, which Elmsberry accepted,

"Well, my spirited fellow, how do? Too much lily in your complexion still; but not so weak as I am; faith you pinked me cursedly. Served me right though, for being such a damned, confounded dupe to that infernal jilt, who, after

after I had sacrificed thousands on her forsook me, for a superannuated Duke! Curse her! I hope she will die in a ditch, for her perfidy to your brother and I. Will you forgive me, my fine fellow? I had been swallowing down bumpers of Champaigne and Burgundy, with which that *Dinvola* supplied me, on purpose to bend me to her wishes, in regard to the masquerade; for curse me if her wicked head did not plan the whole affair that gave you offence; and I was mad, up to every thing that was ridiculous; well, faith I have suffered for it; was cursedly out of spirits; should have been laid to sleep with my ancestors I believe, if this divine widow, my cousin Lawless, had not given me new life by her playful vivacity."

"I am sincerely rejoiced, my Lord, to see you so much recovered; how is the Countess?"

"Oh! poor mam is worse than I am! Devilish awkward of Splendormore to tumble her into a pit; no fault of the gig, John brought my sister safe enough. Faith if any young fellow was to make a gig of the monument, my mam would sit on the top with him, she is so gay and daring. Spoiled her beauty though; covered her face with dells; they say that the *young* loves *sport* in dimples, and the *old* loves may *bury* themselves in my mother's scars, for I think they will not do execution from such trenches; upon my soul, if she smoothes her complexion, she must lay on

on plaster with a trowel to fill up the chasms; well, no matter, my pretty mam has had her day, and now may leave conquest for smiling, dimpled widows like my fair coz."

"Fye Everbloom! how wildly you talk! Do you not see my weeds."

"*Weeds* do you call them? yes I see them, and see *through* them, they are only thin webs to catch flies, and discover a white skin."

"Well, I declare you are grown quite a brilliant wit, my dear Earl, since I nursed you. Ah! there is the charming Duchess of Myrtlebank, and her lovely sister;

sister; how pleasantly her Grace flirts with that handsome officer; who is he?'

"Colonel Hoaxer; he is the devil among the women; he has destroyed more reputations than he has enemies to his country; he wears the uniform of Mars, but has fastened the quiver of Cupid in his epaulette, and wantonly, yet with unerring aim, throws the darts; so take care of yourself, my enchanting widow, for you will be a tempting mark in your transparent *weeds* as you call them. Elmsberry, here comes your Countess, the envy of the women, and the admiration of the men."

"You say truly," said Mr. O'Roon, joining them; "the Countess of Grassmere

Grassmere is a perfect model for fashion; the whole of her attire seems to have been made by modesty, and put on by the graces. The sensible and virtuous of her sex endeavour to be as perfect; but too many, when they come near her, *appear* like the wanton, indelicate Bacchantes by the Lady in Milton's beautiful dramatic poem of Comus."

"Mr. O'Roon," said the Duchess of Myrtlebank as she passed, "I wish you would indulge me with a little sententious discourse, by way of variety, for really the levity of the gay Colonel is too much for my spirits; he rattles away so unmercifully; yet he is a dear agreeable creature, he entertains one with so many scandalous anecdotes of

ones

ones friends; and then he flatters so delightfully."

"Aye, sister, so he does! And how diverting are his annals of gallantry! how drolly he has outwitted fathers and husbands, and imposed upon old women, in order to obtain an interview with the favourite fair one."

"And his escapes are so lucky, he has never been caught," said the Duchess with an encouraging smile. "He is a dear, artful fellow, and knows how to take care of a lady's reputation, he is just like Congreve's comedies, full of intrigue and wit. Yet, by way of change, you know one feels inclined now and then—"

"To

"To walk among the tombs, with Harvey; sing midnight dirges to the moon with Young; or visit the devil with Milton."

"Oh Heavens! no Colonel; my inclinations can never take such a sombrous hue; nothing more dismal than a sentimental comedy, or a modern tragedy will I venture to peruse; and those I sometimes go to sleep over, or throw away before I have read two pages, although, as Sheridan says, they are but "a rivulet of print in a meadow of margin." As to the hideous authors you mentioned, my dear Colonel, and Pope, Homer, Virgil, and Dryden, I detest them all, a parcel of tormenting old quizzes; and so does my sister, for whenever we

were naughty girls, our little crooked aunt, Warply, gave us so many pages, more or less, according to the magnitude of our faults, from some of their stupid books, to get by rote, and so then we amused ourselves with destroying the horrible books, and have hated their names ever since, for our French Governess tormented us over again with them, because she heard *they* were the *punishment* for young ladies, in the most fashionable boarding schools. Then our English master brought them forth once more, and worried us to death, because we did not recite *this* passage, and the *other* passage, just like himself; a disgusting old pedant, how we hated him!"

"If such books were made your punishment,"

nishment," asked O'Roon, "how were you rewarded?"

"With going to all the places of amusement, and reading all diverting books. Oh! how we ran through plays, and novels, skipping over every part which seemed like the dull prosing which we had been surfeited with, and read only the gay and the terrific, for we liked to be merry, and to read of love and intrigues, and still more anxious were we to be terrified; but as to *sentiment* and *morality*, Sir Peter Teazle did not execrate them more, after he had found out Joseph, than we did, for we had actually a natural antipathy to them."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! no wonder, for upon my soul they are intolerably dull! cursedly boring to gay minds like ours, adorable Duchess! By all that is brilliant, you are the most fascinating enchantress I ever conversed with! Who can withstand the triple power of beauty, youth, and wit?"

While the Colonel was addressing the Duchess, he was pressing the hand of Miss Golightly, and gazing with rapture at the lovely widow, who was a new object of attraction, not to be overlooked by a man of gallantry, whose plan was to keep the Duchess in a good humour, by flattery, to marry Miss Golightly for her fortune, and to intrigue with those who would encourage him. The widow

had

had no violent objection to a little flirtation with a handsome young fellow; but her first aim, at present, was to become a Countess, nor had Miss Golightly the least idea of giving up her royal expectations, in favour of Colonel Hoaxer. The Duchess having already secured a little, and an old husband, thought herself privileged to have a handsome Cicisbeo; the Colonel possessed every personal advantage, which could recommend him to that post of *honour;* as the illigitimate son of a nobleman, who by providing for him in the army, thought he had done enough, the young officer was not too rich, to accept liberal presents from a fair hand, to support his appearance as a Colonel, and the Cicisbeo to a Duchess; while his military

rank

rank introduced him to the highest circles, and sanctioned her favourable reception of him, as a suitor to her sister, which, except among a few knowing ones, was the general opinion.

Just as Elmsberry and O'Roon were going to join the Rockalba party, which drew near, the widow Lawless beheld Miss Stuart, who had returned from Plymouth, with her uncle and brother, and was walking between the Countess of Grassmere, and Lady Charlotte Elmsberry.

"Good heaven!" exclaimed the widow, "what do I see! my dear cousin, only look at that artful hussey in black; she it was who robbed me of my poor

dear

dear General, who was the sole cause of his death."

"Was she faith! Then by my soul widow, you and I ought to kneel down, and thank her publicly for her goodness, in releasing you from a cursed tyrant, and giving me such a kind nurse, as my pretty cousin Liberia Lawless."

"How you talk, Lord Everbloom! I tell you she is a wretch; her parents were proud, formal animals—Scotch beggars—I hated them; the father was only a Lieutenant in my General's regiment, and the wicked wretch set his daughter on to lure the General for ever to their mean habitation; and she traduced me to my husband, told him that I carried

ried on an intrigue with Mr Hornsby, and my husband, who adored me, was enraged—he fought with Hornsby and was killed upon the spot; the girl and her brother ran away from Jersey immediately, no one could tell whither."

"Miss Stuart, madam," said O'Roon sternly, "and the Reverend Mr. La Roche, tell a very different story."

"Faith so did my cousin, when first she came over; what strange vagary have you got in your head *now*, Liberia?"

"That young lady came from Jersey to avoid the persecutions of General Lawless."

"La,

"La, Sir! why she lived with him at the Cottage of the Cliff, and never ran away until he was killed, and could no longer protect her; but when girls carry their beauty to market they must invent some plausible tale to impose upon the public, or how could they get into good company; I suppose she passes here for a girl of fortune."

"That she certainly does, and with truth," said Elmsberry; "for that gentleman, in black, who is her uncle, is immensely rich, and has no heirs, except Miss Stuart and her brother; they met Mr. Russell at Southampton."

"Her uncle! why La Roche has told me that she had not a relation in the

world; you are imposed upon, Sir, by the artful creature; that is some old libertine who has taken her into keeping, and passes her off for his niece, merely to have her countenanced in such a place as this."

"As you are resolved to argue against the *truth*, let me say what I will in defence of Miss Stuart, I shall leave her uncle, and a letter from Mr. La Roche, concerning the conduct and death of General Lawless, to vindicate her character, which you will then find unblemished, except by the breath of slander; you, Madam, must have been imposed upon by some person envious of her beauty and her merit, and, I make no doubt, can clear yourself to Mr. Russell."

"Why,

" Why, my pretty Cuz, I fear you will get yourself into a most confounded hobble with this girl and her exalted supporters; I am sure the Earls of Charlewood and Loughmead, and Sir Edward Fitzalbion, would not introduce a doubtful character to the young ladies of their respective families. Why have you changed your story? you said, at first, that Lawless intrigued with Hornsby's wife; and *now* you say he was jealous of Hornsby, because that girl traduced *you*; what the devil am I to think, Liberia; which story am I to believe?"

" I am sure I do not know, my dear Everbloom, for I had them both from my femme-de-chambre, Madame La Medi-

La Medisante; she told me the first in Jersey, when the General was killed—and yesterday she informed me that Miss Stuart was here in high keeping, for she had seen her dashing away in a fine carriage; and then La Medisante told me all about her living in the cliff cottage with Lawless; of her traducing me to secure his affections; and point-out Hornsby as my gallant, which had been the death of my husband, who could not command his jealous rage.—I asked her why she did not tell me all this at first? She replied, that as the girl had run away, she thought I might as well believe the report which was current in Jersey, as less likely to make me uneasy; but when she saw the bold creature flaunting about here, she was

resolved

resolved to make the truth known, that she might be treated as she deserved, and publicly disgraced. This, my dear Cousin, made me speak of the girl as I did; for La Medisante knows the world, and is amazingly clever at finding out secret intrigues."

"And as clever, no doubt, in assisting people to carry them on; faith, I believe she is up to every thing in the intriguing way, and would match, if not out-wit, Hoaxer, in plots and contrivances; if she lived with a wife of mine, I know what I should expect to wear—"

"To *wear*—la! what, dear Everbloom?"

"Antlers—

"Antlers—*antlers*—my fair Cuz; they are ornaments which, however fashionable, do not exactly suit my taste; come, Liberia, let us go home, I am weary, we have been walking a long time."

Mrs. Lawless had, at first, told the truth to Everbloom; and Madame La Medisante had spoken according to her own conjecture. The General was too great a libertine to overlook the arch black eyes, and wanton looks, of his wife's femme-de-chambre, who, as she loved handsome men, and handsome presents, was also extremely fond of being a person of consequence in the families in which she lived;—and too weak to withstand the artful attacks of a general officer,

officer, she contrived to play off *ruse contre ruse* very successfully, in regard to pecuniary advantage. She considered the *wife* as a being who would never stand in her way; but poor Miss Stuart became a potent object of jealousy; she was regarded as a dangerous rival, and rejoiced was Madame La Medisante when she was told that lovely girl had quitted Jersey. At first, she passively believed the true report of the duel; but when the General was dead, and Mrs Lawless sent her to see what furniture there was in Cliff Cottage, she immediately concluded that it had actually been the abode of Miss Stuart, because the General had furnished it even with a wardrobe, ready for the reception of that devoted girl, who so providentially escaped his machinations.

Madame La Medisante artfully secured the wardrobe to herself, and disposed of the other things to the best advantage for her mistress, who was not very quick at finding out deceptions, for she abhorred trouble, and was extremely credulous. When Madame beheld Miss Stuart, in the Countess of Grassmere's carriage, she was determined to prevent, if possible, a meeting between that young lady and the widow, lest something might be said which would discover her embezzlement of the clothes, and, therefore, made up a story the most likely to depreciate the innocent girl, in the opinion of Mrs. Lawless, who was, at all times, too ready to believe a scandalous tale, against a *pretty* woman in particular:—

particular;—as envy occupied a large space in her weak mind.

The Earl of Everbloom, by artfully cross-questioning Madame La Medisante, before her mistress, discovered her deceit, and threatened her with such punishment for defamation that she was terribly alarmed, and immediately offered herself to a family who were going to Jamaica, and wanted a French attendant for their children. Thus did the young Earl, who felt a strong inclination to marry the gay widow, effectually get rid of a woman whom he considered as a dangerous attendant on a young and lovely wife.

He

He then introduced his cousin at Rockalba Castle;—and, in her name, made a very handsome apology for the error into which she had been led by her soubrette, whom she had discharged. The apology was graciously accepted by Mr. Russell and the Stuarts, to whom the widow behaved with a captivating sweetness of manners, which she could assume whenever she wished to render herself agreeable; and she found that the Earl was anxious for her to be well received by the Rockalba party.

CHAP-

CHAPTER IX.

A Packet and a Discovery.

WHILE Sir Edward Fitzalbion entertained his guests with rural breakfasts, concerts, elegant dinners, and splendid balls, at Rockalba Castle, he did not forget to encourage, in the most liberal manner, the libraries, theatre, concerts, and every place of public resort;—for he considered that every effort for the accommodation

commodation, and entertainment, of the public, deserved to be rewarded; as did also merit, in every line in which it was exerted.

Nor were the cottagers forgotten by their kind benefactor; while festivity reigned in the castle, plenty smiled in the cot; no discontent lowered on the brows of *his* tenants, who, blessed with all the *comforts* of life, envied not those that enjoyed the *superfluities*.

Sir Edward beheld, with delight, content adorn the cottage of the Rowlands, and the rose of health glow on the cheeks of the grateful owners, and their children. Mr. Rowland had far exceeded the Admiral's expectations, as groom of the

the chambers, and, in all the festivities, had evinced a taste and activity, in the execution of the adornments, which gave the highest satisfaction.

Triton Oakheart, and Susan Fairfield, formed the most sincere friendship with the worthy Rowlands, and Sir Edward had already marked out the ground for a cottage and garden, which he intended for Triton and Susan, on their marriage, that they might still be near the castle and their friends, for he thought that the good sense and experience of Mrs. Rowland rendered her an excellent friend and adviser for Susan.

The Countess of Grassmere observed, with regret, that notwithstanding her

promise

promise to be his, and the attention she paid to Mr. Elmsberry, his fine expressive features, still wore, too frequently, the appearance of melancholy, which made her fear that his heart was not perfectly at ease. She accused herself for having ever given a preference to Arrandale, and feared the idea that she had taken pity on *him* when her heart was more strongly attached to *another*, affected his delicate mind. Poor Arrandale too, was far from happy—but still behaved to her with that easy indifference that she was convinced he was not unhappy on *her* account, but on Lady Charlotte's; their behaviour, uniformly, was that of a tenderly-attached brother and sister, confidential soothers of each other in some reciprocal affliction; and

sometimes

sometimes Stella thought that Elmsberry was uneasy about them—yet she never asked him, because she chose not to seem inquisitive concerning Arrandale, lest Elmsberry should think her more interested for him than she really was. Perfectly satisfied with her conduct, in betrothing herself so seriously to her amiable William, her heart felt gay and happy, and she strove, by the cheerfulness of her manners, to enliven the spirits of her lover, and her friends.

Lord Heathland and Lady Ellen were agreeable to each other and to all their friends; they preserved a happy medium between uneasily-fond and coldly-indifferent; they seemed pleased to be together,

ther, but were not dull when apart; no obstacle interfered to excite the slightest apprehension: the period for their nuptials was fixed—they looked forward to it with delight, and they truly enjoyed the calm of love.

The Marquis of Rosebower, being unsuccessful in his suit to the young Countess, renewed his attentions to Lady Jane Elmsberry, who, apparently, preferred him to Lord Splendormore, who was very much piqued at being thrown out, as he called it, by the Marquis, when he thought himself sure of Lady Jane, and he entirely imputed the loss of her affections to his misfortune of overturning the Countess of Everbloom in the Westminster gig; yet he thought it

was

very hard that he should suffer every way by that accident—his vanity was checked and spirits oppressed; he imagined that Miss Stuart pitied him; he admired the gentleness of her manners and her beauty; but he feared that Mr. Russell could not give her a fortune sufficient to counterbalance her want of high birth, in the opinion of his father—and that idea afflicted him.—Miss Stuart was the sensible Child of Nature—affectation would disgust her; he must leave it off, and speak in his own voice;—keep his glass in his bosom, and see with his own eyes; he would walk with the firmness which became his athletic form, and discard the awkward stoop, and shambling lounge;—he would correct all that was fantastical in his dress, all that was

frivolous in his conversation, to engage the *love*, as well as pity, of the interesting Anne Stuart; and did all in his power to acquire the approbation of Mr. Russell, and the friendship of Theodore. O'Roon, who rejoiced in the amendment in Splendormore, became his confidant, and advised him to ask the Earl's consent to address Miss Stuart, before he attempted to gain her affection.

Such was the situation of the young people at Rockalba Castle, when Mr. Russell received a packet from Cassumbazar, sealed with black; he said, "This sable badge announces, I fear, the death of my good friend the Rajah Meer Abdalla."

"Do

"Do not leave the table," said Sir Edward, for the fruit was just brought in; "open your letters, for I know you must feel a melancholy curiosity."

Mr. Russell bowed, opened the packet, ran over the contents, and said, wiping away the tears of sorrow, and gratitude,—

"Revered Abdalla! thou art gone, and to the last hast shewn thy friendship for me! I am too rich! At the death of my uncle I inherited immense wealth; I have been so successful in my traffick, that I have doubled the sum; and because I would receive no remuneration for an act of humanity, Abdalla has bequeathed to me thirty thousand rupees,

and precious gems, to an equal amount, which have to the full been paid already, into the hands of my agents, by his eldest son, Meer Mahome Ismaelt, the present Rajah of Cassumbazar. Dear, unknown Arrandale, thou existing image of Abdalla, thrown in my way by heaven, to be the means of blessing me with these my lawful heirs, to thee, before these noble witnesses, I give the whole of Abdalla's legacy, which will make thee equal to the Stuarts, in point of fortune."

"Generous man!" exclaimed the Earl of Charlewood. "Your knowledge of the Rajah of Cassumbazar, your meeting with that young man, the Rajah's death, and noble bequest to you, and

and your liberal resignation of it, in favour of an unknown orphan, appears as wonderful as any eastern tale I ever read. From his birth, an impenetrable veil of mystery has enveloped my adopted son, and that packet, like a powerful talisman, undraws the veil, and frees me from the sacred bond of silence. Behold the grandson of Abdalla, born in Cassumbazar."

"By which of his children?" eagerly demanded Mr. Russell; Arrandale started up, covered his eyes with his hand, walked up and down the room, with hasty steps, and then, stopping by the Earl of Charlewood, said:

"And why was I not to know from whom

whom I sprung, until the moment that I heard of his death? why was I denied the power of throwing myself at his feet, and soliciting his blessing?"

"To preserve you from his curse. You asked me, Sir, by which of his children, this boy became the grandson of the Rajah. By his favourite daughter, the accomplished Roseatenissa, whom you mentioned in your narrative."

"Good heaven! and who was his father?"

"An English officer, to whom she was *married*, *for* whom she became a christian, and *with* whom, had heaven spared her, she would have come to England.

I read

I read the questions of your inquisitive eyes. I am an officer, I was at Cassumbazar at the time of your birth; I took charge of you, and brought you home with me."

The Earl paused; and Lady Charlotte fainted; Arrandale flew to her, supported her head on his bosom, and bore her in his arms to a chair near the door, which opened into the garden; the air revived her, and a gush of tears relieved her agitated heart. The Countess of Charlewood proposed her retiring to her chamber; but she imputed her fainting to the powerful scent of a mellon, that stood near her, and her tears to the interest she took in Arrandale's story which she apologized for interrupting, and

and begged the Earl would continue; he complied with her request, and continued, addressing himself to Arrandale.

" I see you think, and certainly with great reason, that I am your father; but I assure you, my dear boy, I am *not*; your father is dead; you are blessed with relations, who have a sincere affection for you, as George Arrandale, and surely it will increase, when I present you to them, as a brother and a nephew in your *real* name of Henry Fitzalbion; the Countess of Grassmere is your sister, Sir Edward is your uncle. I was compelled, by a solemn oath, to conceal your being the son of Colonel Fitzalbion, and the Princess Roseatenissa, until the Rajah, her father, was dead, lest, being a faithful

faithful and strict believer in Mahomet, he should curse her memory for marrying a christian, and curse her innocent child, on account of his father."

The Admiral affectionately embraced his nephew, and undoubted heir. Stella embraced her brother, inexpressibly happy in calling him by a title, which, she was sure, would make her beloved Elmsberry and Charlotte happy.

The Earl of Charlewood, who had left the room, soon returned with a casket of sandal-wood, which he opened, and presented Mr. Fitzalbion with the miniatures of his father and mother, very richly set with brilliants; the Colonel was in his uniform, the Princess in an

Eastern

Eastern dress, suitable to her high rank; he gazed on them alternately with reverential sorrow; he beheld in the manly and handsome features of his father a striking resemblance of the Admiral, and the Countess of Grassmere. Every feature in the expressive countenance of his mother was delicately beautiful; a captivating, dimpled smile parted the finely-formed lips, and discovered teeth whiter than pearls; and the eyes were uncommonly fascinating, for in the expressive portrait the artist had given a just idea of the original.

The Earl then gave him, from the same casket, a certificate of his mother's abjuration of the Mahometan religion, her baptism in the protestant faith, and her

her marriage with Colonel Fitzalbion, signed by herself, in Persic characters, by the Colonel, the chaplain of the regiment, who performed the baptismal and matrimonial ceremonies, and by the Earl of Charlewood, then Lord Heathland, who was present at both the sacred rites, and the only witness, except a christian slave, who had been an attendant on the mother of Roseatenissa, and her own nurse, in whom she could place the strictest confidence.

Besides this consequential proof of his parentage, the casket contained a letter from Colonel Fitzalbion to his son; and one in Persic from the Princess, neither to be opened until the death of the Rajah; and a large quantity of valuable

gems

gems and pearls, loose. The letters were far more precious to Fitzalbion than the gems and pearls, and too sacred to be read before so many; he retired to a bower in the garden, opened his father's first, and was disappointed at seeing only a few lines, to the following purport;

"My dear Son,

"As the duty of my profession continually exposes me to a sudden death, it is very probable that I may never have the felicity of embracing you with paternal affection, and pronouncing a blessing, while I clasp you to my heart. Take it, therefore, in writing. May heaven protect and guide you through this world, and make you worthy of eternal happiness, where I fervently hope to meet your dear mother, and, after you have run a glorious race,

you,

you, my beloved son! I have placed you in *truly* noble hands. If it is destined, that we should never meet, you will have a protector who will always regard you as a son. Farewell! we *may* meet *soon* in this world; if we should, what a blessing it will be to your affectionate father,

"HENRY FITZALBION."

What a treasure to Fitzalbion was his father's blessing! and he should find a mother's also! how glad he was that he had studied the Persic language: the address, after the Eastern fashion, was figurative.

"To the blooming, tender blossom of a withering tree.

"Flower

"Flower of beauty! shall I never behold thy opening charms? *Never.* Blighted by illness, I shall soon be torn away from the face of the earth; but my form will exist in the heart of thy father; it will flourish in his memory, such as he first beheld it with the eyes of love. Sweet bud, mayest thou blow in the sun of felicity! May the invigorating dew of health foster the expanding beauties, and the smiling Zephyrs of delight play around thee! Oh! may the curses of my father never blast thy lovely form, or mental happiness in this world, nor exclude thee from celestial glory in paradise!

"I have abjured the religion of my father! I have married a christian! Given

ven birth to a christian child! As yet my father knows it not. Oh! Alla, who art the God of the Mahometans! Oh! God, who art the Alla of the christians! Thou omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent ruler of the universe! if I have done wrong, be mine the punishment! Have mercy on my innocent child! Preserve him from my father's wrath! Oh! may my father never know what I have done, never execrate the memory of his disobedient daughter!

"My spirit is weak—my mind agitated—I am dying.—I must leave the beloved of my soul—I must leave my little Henry; he will never know his mother; I durst not give him a farewell kiss—

kiss—*no*—I must forego that comfort, to obtain a blessing from my revered Sire.

"Farewell! Love thy father; remember me with tenderness, after thou hast read this letter; and, in the ever-blooming groves of Paradise, mayest thou meet thy mother, Roseatenissa Fitzalbion."

"Heaven grant I may! and *thou*, my revered father, dear unknown parents, may I meet you both in everlasting bliss! Stella of Grassmere my *sister!* Thank heaven I could hear it without a pang!"

He hastened back to the dining saloon, and gave the letters to Sir Edward,

ward, who told him, that he must translate his mother's, or read it in English. Fitzalbion chose the former, and retired for that purpose.

Elmsberry took an opportunity, as they were walking in the garden, to congratulate the Countess on finding a brother in their beloved Arrandale,—a legitimate brother, and not a natural son of Lord Charlewood's, which he had always imagined.

"I loved him," continued Elmsberry, "notwithstanding the many moments of uneasiness he has caused me; when we were children, your shewing a preference to him wounded my heart; yet, I was very much grieved when he went

to

to Bengal; after a time I was happier than ever, for then I had no rival in your affections. When he returned, graced as he is with personal, and mental perfections, I still admired and loved him; but concluded that all my hopes of happiness, with Stella of Grassmere, were annihilated for ever.—What my feelings were, I need not tell you, when I beheld a mutual attachment, as I thought, between Arrandale and you, for you read my heart in my looks, and felt for its sufferings; you pitied, though you could not love the despairing Elmsberry; I endeavoured to conquer my self-love, and succeeded so far, that when I observed the change in Arrandale's behaviour, I was miserable, because I then thought that it made you unhappy.

unhappy. You betrothed yourself to me! You preserved my life! Yet, shall I own, that I sometimes feared you had been impelled by generous pity, to bless your suffering Elmsberry, more than by love?"

"I know you did, and have I not, by every means in my power, endeavoured to obliterate those unjust fears from your mind?"

"You have, and succeeded, my beloved Stella. Yet, still our East Indian seemed ordained to make me uneasy; Charlotte loved him more than the doubt in regard to his birth permitted. Now, thank heaven! all my fears are totally removed with the names of *George Arrandale;* and in that of Henry Fitzalbion,

albion our amiable East Indian will be doubly my brother."

"And my ever dear Charlotte will be doubly *my* sister; and now I may hope to see you cheerful as your happy Stella."

The subject of their discourse met, and asked them to accompany him to the Pavilion, in the Garden, where the Earl of Charlewood was going to favour them with the short history of his parents.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER X.

An Eastern tale.

"You, Mr. Russell," said the Earl, addressing that gentleman when the party were assembled, "witnessed the terror which the fire in Rajah Abdalla's palace occasioned among the ladies; who were then, for the first time, exposed unveiled, and almost unattired, to the English officers, whose camp was within a mile of the palace. Roused by the picquet

quet guard, when the flames broke out, they flew to the spot with a large party of men, to afford all possible aid. The Colonel, Fitzalbion, and myself, the captain, with the true gallantry of British soldiers, devoted all our attention to the terrified ladies, who were flying from the flames. I hurried away with five or six brown beauties, and lodged them in a place of safety; lieutenants, ensigns, serjeants, and common men, had their share of distressed females to protect, and I firmly believe acted like honourable protectors.

"The Colonel was so long absent, that I was seriously alarmed, lest he had ventured too far, in order to rescue some hapless female, and had fallen a

victim

victim to the flames. Restless, and uneasy at his long absence, I resolved to go in search of my friend; and had the happiness of meeting him in a grove of orange trees near the palace. He was walking slowly with his arms folded, and apparently absorbed in thought; I stood directly before him, without his noticing my approach; I asked him with which of the Rajah's favourites he had left his heart; but he answered seriously;—

"'We are near the garden; come further into the grove, and I will tell you with whom I left it, if you will promise to be secret.'

"I promised strictly, and we advanced into

into the grove; and when he thought we were at a sufficient distance, he said:

"'It has been my good fortune to save the Princess. Oh! Heathland, what a soft, bewitching, modest creature! Slightly wrapped in a muslin sleeping dress, she shrunk like a sensitive plant, from my touch. I held her with tender, and respectful force, and bore her safely through the flames.—She expressed great apprehension for the fate of her father, who I assured her was safe, and giving orders to his people. This silenced her filial anxiety; then she recollected her nurse, and entreated me to hasten back to the building, and call Gulima. I reposed the trembling Princess on a bank of Hyacinths; and flew back calling Gulima who

who answered me from behind the flames, which were crossing the vestibule. The steps were adorned with flowers, in china vases; I caught them up and threw them into the flames, which the damp mould abated; I rushed past, and before they had renewed their fury brought out the old nurse, who threw herself at the feet of the Princess, and conjured her to go to her own pavilion, at the end of the garden, while she informed the Rajah of her safety, and where to find her.

"But oh! my child, my tender Roseatenissa, thou art without slippers, and the dew hangs on the flowers!" exclaimed Gulima. I took the still trembling maid once more in my arms, and

bore her to the pavilion, her head reclined on my shoulder; her palpitating heart throbbed against my bosom.—Gently I laid my interesting charge on a cushion, supported about three inches from an elevated part of the floor, on a rich frame of gold, beneath a superb canopy; before I descended from the throne, I, humbly kneeling, kissed the hand of Roseatenissa. She gratefully thanked me for preserving herself and her dear Gulima from the raging flames, which they should never have had the courage to pass without my assistance."

"Colonel Fitzalbion then gave me such a lover-like description of the Princess, that I perceived he had saved her out of one kind of fire, and she, involuntarily

involuntarily perhaps, had kindled another in his heart, which, I feared, might be of dangerous consequence. I knew arguing against love is the surest means of fanning the flame, therefore listened to my friend in silence. I need not describe Roseatenissa, as you have seen her picture. Fitzalbion continued,

" ' The pavilion opened into the most beautifully-adorned conservatory that can be imagined. The Princess told me to look through the rose trees, which shaded the windows of the pavilion, and if I saw the Rajah, or any one coming along the walk with Gulima, to go into the conservatory, where I should find a door, which would lead me into the orange-grove; for that she would

not, to possess the mines of Golconda, have her father know she had been unveiled, and so loosely attired in the arms of an European officer; that she knew Gulima would not tell him, and that she intended to say, they ran away by themselves to the pavilion when first they were alarmed. Luckily I saw Gulima coming quite alone; she told the Princess that her father rejoiced in her safety, and that when the fire was extinguished he would visit her; she had not mentioned me, and Roseatenissa commended her discretion, and said she hoped that I had not been observed in the confusion. Gulima assured her that I had not, as she had got into the palace by another way, which in their fright they had not recollected, and the

fire

fire was likely to be extinguished without injuring the part appropriated to the Princess and her suite. Gulima had brought her some apparel; therefore, after requesting permission to enquire after her health at the door of the conservatory, I took my leave with regret. And now, my dear friend, I exist on the hope of beholding this fascinating beauty to-morrow evening in the pavilion, where she has promised to meet me.'

"Thus commenced Fitzalbion's love for Roseatenissa. How delightfully he was now rewarded for the pains he had taken in studying the language of Persia, which enabled him to converse with the Princess and Gulima, who both spoke it fluently, and had been agreeably

ably surprised when he addressed them in that language.

" The lovers contrived to meet almost every evening in the pavilion, which was entirely devoted to the Princess, who took great delight in the cultivation of shrubs and flowers, and passed a considerable part of her time among the blooming treasures of her conservatory, sometimes with several of her women, at others with only Gulima, and very frequently alone.

" Fitzalbion was admitted through the door of the conservatory, and had poured forth the tenderest vows of love at the feet of Roseatenissa, who had given her whole heart to the preserver

of

of her life, when the Rajah ordered his daughter to think of the Nabob Meer Mamoud Khooffroo as her destined husband, who, being of their own tribe, had demanded her in marriage, and would claim her as his bride when he had concluded a peace with a neighbouring Prince, with whom he was at war. Roseatenissa concealed the affliction this intelligence gave her, and bowed a silent consent to the will of her father. Her sorrow was reserved for the fond bosom of Gulima, who being a Christian in her heart, had inspired the Princess with a respect for Christianity, and the manners of its followers. Gulima had heard that Khooffroo was a haughty tyrant among his women, and spared no expense to

gratify

gratify his love for variety; she persuaded Roseatenissa to turn Christian, marry Colonel Fitzalbion, and go with him to England, where she would enjoy liberty, possess the undivided affections of her husband, and bring up her children in the true belief.

"Gulima thought herself perfectly right in giving that advice, and Roseatenissa balanced duty to her father, against love and Fitzalbion, her own inclinations, and her duty to God; a combination which heavily overbalanced filial duty and affection; nor did she at that time feel the dread of paternal wrath, which, as her health declined, agonized her bosom.

"The

" The lovers eagerly followed the advice of Gulima, and the chaplain of our regiment, who was a very sensible man, took all the precautions which secrecy would allow, to give validity to the marriage. Before Fitzalbion could take the necessary steps previous to his return to England, his beloved wife was in a state which precluded her from taking so long a voyage, and you, Henry, made your appearance in the pavilion, and was given into my care through the door of the conservatory by Gulima, without any one belonging to the palace, except herself, having the least knowledge of your birth, or of the situation of the Princess.

" I had provided a nurse for my

child, and gave you to her under the name of George Arrandale, although the good chaplain had baptised you Henry, after your father, in the conservatory, before you were put into my hands. The marriage of Roseatenissa with the Nabob Khoffroo was delayed on account of her visible ill health. And whether it was from Gulima's want of skill, or from the extreme delicacy of the Princess's constitution, my friend had the affliction of beholding his beloved rapidly decline after the birth of his son. The Princess, perfectly sensible of her approaching fate, felt the severest mental pangs every time her father evinced paternal affection, and his grief at the idea of losing her.

" Our

" Our good chaplain died soon after he had baptised her child, and in vain did Fitzalbion, Gulima, and myself, endeavour to tranquillize her mind; her duplicity to a tender father embittered her last moments, and impressed on them such a terrific dread of his cursing her memory, her husband, and her child, that she enjoined us, in the most solemn manner, not to reveal, even to her son, the secret of his birth, nor permit him to take the name of his father, or know who either of his parents were, during the existence of her father, not even though the child were to be in England, or any other part of the world. We took the solemn oath which she required, and she was in some degree tranquillized.

" She

"She conjured me to be a tender guardian to her son, and put into my hands the sandall-wood casket, which contained a large sum in gold rupees, and jewels of immense value. She chose the name of George for you, as that of the Tutelar Saint of England, and Arrandale, being the name of a remote, but beautiful valley in which you were nursed; and while you were a child you went by this appellation, 'George, of Arrandale.' I told your nurse, as a great secret, that you were the son of an English merchant, by a girl who was an attendant in his house, and who, having no child by his wife, and rather advanced in years, would reward her handsomely if she took care of you, who would be his heir. That story silenced all inquiries,

quiries, and the merchant's heir was carefully attended.

"The Princess Roseatenissa existed but a few days after she had deposited the casket in my hands. Fitzalbion was inconsolable; he confined himself to his bed, and soon gained permission to quit the regiment, and return to England for his health. I was appointed to fill his post, and remained above four years longer. Gulima lived but a few weeks after her mistress, therefore the secret was confined to Fitzalbion and myself. Previous to his quitting India, he gave me the letter for you, and about three years after his arrival in England, he married Lady Stella, the Earl of Grassmere's only child.

"After,

" After the departure of Fitzalbion, my residence in Asia became so extremely unpleasant to me, that I took the first honourable opportunity of disposing of my commission, and returned to my native land with my little Indian Prince, who was then a merry prattler. We arrived too late to see Fitzalbion, who was just set out for Ireland. I paid my respects to Lady Stella, whom I found both lovely and amiable, and, partial as I was to my friend, I thought her worthy of him. But, alas! I need not continue my narrative; you all know how very soon the valuable pair were lost to the world.—You and I, Sir Edward Fitzalbion, have evinced our regard to your brother by 'sanctifying his relics,' and have had the felicity of beholding his children

children do honour to those who gave them birth, and to us who were their guardians. Now, Henry Fitzalbion, you know my motives for a prohibition which, I believe, you thought too severely rigid."

"I did, indeed, my Lord; and now hope that you will reward my strict obedience to your injunctions with the hand of Lady Charlotte; for I flatter myself that she loves the Countess of Grassmere too well to render *her brother* unhappy."

Stella, taking a hand of each, led them to the Earl of Charlewood, and placing their hands in his, requested him

to

to give her brother the amiable object of his affections. The Earl said, that he could not possibly receive a son-in-law dearer to him than Fitzalbion.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XI.

The Conclusion.

Sir Edward Fitzalbion, who never promised without performing, took the opportunity, when the Earl of Loughmead was lamenting the fate of Roseatenissa, to mention Anna, and gave her story complete, concealing only the names of the lovers and their respective abodes; laying the scene in England to elude

elude suspicion: the Earl who, when his own family pride and wish for riches, in order to aggrandize his children, were out of the question, possessed delicate and liberal sentiments, applauded the conduct of the young man,—and said, he hoped his father would soon be reconciled to him. This was enough for the Admiral, who immediately gave him the story as written by O'Roon. According to Sir Edward's request, the Earl hastily read it to the end, without speaking, then, folding it, deliberately said,

"I am fairly caught; nor will I attempt to condemn, in my own son, what I applaud in another's: I have long suspected that O'Roon was either very seriously

riously attached, or married, and I feared to some vulgar girl, whose only charm was personal beauty; therefore, I own to you that I am agreeably surprised, and most sincerely forgive him."

"Thank heaven! how happy you will make him."

"I have been too anxious to see my children highly or richly married; I consented that Splendormore should make proposals to one of the Golightly's; and I have been so disgusted with the light, imprudent behaviour of both the Duchess and her Sister, that I have truly rejoiced their ambition looked higher than my son; then I found that exalted birth did not exempt girls from trifling coquet-

ish

ish behaviour, which I could not approve, and, to my mortification, those whom I should have been happy to call daughter, wisely rejected the affected, extravagant Slendormore, who seemed to love himself better than any thing in the world. Now he appears an altered man.—Miss Stuart has done wonders; and it is impossible for me to have any objection to the match, since the all-perfect Countess of Grassmere has nobly, and disinterestedly, chosen Elmsberry, and Lord Charlewood's daughters have fixed their choice. Ah, my friend! had I not proudly checked the *unknown* Arrandale, for his attention to my daughter, I might, perhaps, have called Fitzalbion son! However, I have no just cause for regret; Heathland seems to have left off his bad habits."

"I never thought that young man incorrigible.—But see, my Lord, here comes the melancholy O'Roon."

"My son," said the Earl, holding out his hand to him, "you have had an excellent advocate in the Admiral; I sincerely forgive your clandestine proceedings, and wish to embrace your Anna and my grand-children. Write to her immediately, and tell her that your haughty father has learned wisdom enough to wish his children happy. I will write to her myself when I have communicated the story of Hybla Cot to your mother and Splendormore; and now the weight of secrecy is removed, let us have the pleasure of seeing you cheerful, my dear boy."

O'Roon

O'Roon was greatly affected by his fathers unexpected kindness, and thanked him in the most grateful manner; nor was he deficient in gratitude to Sir Edward.

While this conversation passed in the garden, Lady Ellen had been entertaining her Heathland with some of his favourite airs, when she recollected that she must make some slight arrangement in her dress, as she was to make a morning visit, with her mother, to the Countess of Everbloom, who was sufficiently recovered to receive ladies in her dressing-room; Lord Heathland, loath to part with her, took her chair at the piano, and sung, extempore, the following words, to a well-known Irish tune:

"Ah,

"Ah, stay with thy Henry, dear Ellen O'Roon!
Sole joy of my heart, do not leave me so soon!
I will part with thee never—
But will gaze on thee ever,
When the blissful time comes—and oh! may it
come soon—
When Ellen is mine, and no longer O'Roon!"

"Bravo!" exclaimed Stella, who was painting on a white silk mantle, a border of yellow jessamine; "I give you credit for your extempore words, which flowed so smoothly from the heart: pray, my dear Ellen, reward your poet with one more charming air, at least."

"Before her Ladyship had time to begin, the Earl of Everbloom and Sir Jehu Hazard were announced; they scarcely gave themselves time for the usual questions of ceremony, when

the

they asked, eagerly, if any of the party had heard the particulars of what happened at the Duke of Myrtlebank's? and, on receiving a negative, Hazard said,

"You must have observed that the Duchess has flirted with Hoaxer very conspicuously in public; but yesterday morning, the Duke, on entering the drawing-room rather abruptly, found the handsome Colonel seated on a sofa, so lovingly by her Grace, that the Duke spoke in a higher key than usual; until the Colonel assured his Grace that he was ardently soliciting the Duchess to plead for him to Miss Golightly, whom he was ready to marry that instant, to convince his Grace of his innocence, in regard to the Duchess.

"The Duke, tenacious of his own honour, resolved to fix Hoaxer, and sent for Miss Golightly: when she entered the room, he took her hand, and told her that he had promised to intercede for the Colonel, who anxiously hoped for the honour of her hand. 'At whose ball?' asked the lady. 'In wedlock,' replied the Duke, pettishly. 'Impossible; why, la, Duke, I am married already!'

"'*Married!*' said the Duke; 'to whom?' 'To an Italian Prince; I am the Princess di Castella Inaura!' '*Inaura?*' 'Yes; my husband is called Prince Roberto Quizzerli di Castella Inaura.' 'You are imposed on; there is no such a title; where

was you married?' 'At Madame la Mode's, by a special licence.' 'At your milliner's; and why this secrecy?' 'Oh, because the Prince has wounded an emigrant Duke in a duel, and is here incognito, at Madame La Mode's; I have been married a week; he shall come and answer for himself.' The fair *Princess* wrote an invitation; the Prince Roberto Quizzirli di Castella Inaura appeared; and Hoaxer said, ironically, 'I am happy to see your *Royal Highness*.' 'Blown, by heaven! No matter—I am married, fast enough: so, Colonel, you are welcome to proclaim me, Bob Quizzerly; neither more nor less than a Captain in your regiment; and you, my love, are Mrs. Quizzerly, the Captain's lady. I married you partly for love,

partly

partly for money; and I am not your inferior in birth. I played upon your foible, it is true; so might a swindler, or highwayman; therefore be thankful that I am nothing *worse* than Captain Quizzerly, son to a scrivener, who loves money better than his only son.' The disappointed bride fell into fits; her husband, who is a very handsome young man, behaved to her with tenderness, and assured her that love chiefly impelled him to carry on the deception. This pacified her a little, but knowing the laugh would be against her, she set off with her husband, immediately, for Tulip-Hall."

"So much for the *would-be Princess*, and now for the Duchess her sister," said

said Everbloom. "The Duke went to the play; her Grace pleaded indisposition, and staid at home. The Duke returned unexpectedly early, and caught Hoaxer with the Duchess, instead of a physician; his Grace had taken the Marquis of Zephyrly, and Lord Alexander with him; no doubt remained, and he very politely left the lovers at full liberty, and spanked away to London, with his two noble witnesses, as fast as a coach and six could whirl them. Her Grace, who will soon dwindle into plain Miss Golightly, went off early this morning with Colonel Hoaxer; but whither no one knows at present. Hazard heard the first part from the Colonel himself, and I, the latter from the Marquis of Rosebower: but the sudden

departure

departure of the whole set has put Weymouth in an uproar, and each scandalmonger pours forth a different tale."

The comments on these events may be easily imagined. The Duke, certain of obtaining a divorce, is looking out, not for a *wife*, but for chére amie, although many fair candidates put up for his coronet. The Quizzerly's have dashed gaily into life, at Bath, while the Duchess and Hoaxer, who at her request has given up his commission, live retired at Tulip Hall, until they are impowered to marry; and both sisters comfort themselves, that if they have not *interest* sufficient to obtain titles for their husbands, they have *money* enough to purchase them.

Sir Jehu Hazard, and Lady Eva, are an agreeable fashionable couple; never ill-tempered but when they are extremely unsuccessful in gambling, to which they are both too much addicted, but have the good luck in general to win six times out of nine.

The widow Lawless quitted Weymouth, Countess of Everbloom, and Lady Frivola, the bride of Mr. Gossamer, with little prospects of connubial felicity; the women being vain and frivolous, the men thoughtless and dissipated.

The Earl of Loughmead having affairs in Ireland, which would not admit of a longer absence from that kingdom, and Mr. O'Roon being impatient to see his

Anna,

Anna, the marriage of Lord Heathland with Lady Ellen was hurried, that they might be present at the ceremony, which was performed at Rockalba Castle, and, at the same time, Lady Charlotte gave her hand to Mr. Fitzalbion. He had been presented by the admiral to all the tenants, as the heir to Rockalba, and the Baronetcy of Fitzalbion, and consequently his marriage was celebrated with great festivity, and liberal benefactions, in which Heathland and his bride partook, for his paternal seat, Heathland Priory, which was undergoing such alterations that it was not likely to be habitable until the next summer.

As Lady Loughmead was to leave her daughter in England, she earnestly entreated

treated Mr. Russell to accompany them to Ireland, with the Stuarts, that she might have another daughter in Miss Stuart; an arrangement which gave infinite pleasure to Lord Splendormore. They accordingly made the voyage together, and arrived safe in Dublin bay; immediately visited Shamrock Hall, where they were met by the amiable Anna, and her little ones. O'Roon had the felicity of seeing his dear ones tenderly pressed to the bosoms of his parents---the only thing wanting to complete his happiness.

Sir Edward Fitzalbion has fixed the day on which the Countess of Grassmere completes her eighteenth year for her bridal day. Then, according to the

Earl's

Earl's will, she becomes possessor of the Grassmere estates; which will afford an elegant establishment for Mr. Elmsberry and herself; he has relinquished all thoughts of adding church emoluments to so large a fortune, and looks forward, with delight, to the day that will bless him with the hand of his adored Stella. Lady Jane has promised to give her's to the Marquis of Rosebower at the same time. They behold an excellent pattern of conjugal happiness in Lord and Lady Heathland, and Mr. and Lady Charlotte Fitzalbion.

Stella has no cause to think her Elmsberry grave; he his now the gayest among the gay; he sees his star of fashion shine serenely bright amidst admiring crowds,

and

and Sir Edward anticipates the time when, in the affectionate duties of a wife and mother, no Lady shall excel his beautiful, and sensible Stella of Grassmere.

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